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**PSYCHO-  
ANALYSIS  
FOR NORMAL PEOPLE**

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**PSYCHO-  
ANALYSIS  
FOR NORMAL PEOPLE**

**BY  
GERALDINE COSTER  
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PRINCIPAL OF WYCHWOOD SCHOOL  
OXFORD**

*Third Edition*

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**TO**  
***MY FRIEND AND PARTNER***  
***MARGARET LEE***





## PREFACE

THIS little book on a big subject was begun at the suggestion of the matron of a public hospital, who deplored the lack of a manual of practical psychology on modern lines entertaining enough and brief enough for nurses to read in their rare moments of leisure. It is also in some degree the outcome of the remark of a well-known examiner in psychology, to the effect that the papers of candidates for the teaching profession seldom show any realization of the practical bearing of psychology on the work of educating and training children.

This is not surprising when one considers the small amount of attention paid in available text-books on psychology to the practical everyday bearings of the subject; and yet, unless the practical link is made, the time devoted by teachers to the study of the subject is more or less wasted.

An attempt has been made in the following pages to supply the need for a practical treatment, and to set forth in the simplest possible way the main principles of psycho-therapy in its application not to the insane or abnormal, but to the ordinary people whom we meet every day, both children and adults.

A word of explanation is perhaps needed as

to the use of the term *psycho-analysis* in a book which makes no pretence of following exclusively the Freudian School. The psychological expert to-day has admitted the claim of the followers of Freud to the exclusive use of this term, and in a technical treatise it would be an inexcusable error to use it in the wider sense. But to the general public the aspect of psychology here dealt with is still known as *psycho-analysis*, and it seems better in a popular hand-book to employ, at least on the title-page, the popular phraseology. In the body of the book an effort has been made to explain the more correct usage.

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G. C.

OXFORD, 1926.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

PERHAPS the greatest difference between present-day psychology and the psychology of twenty years ago is that in its old form the subject was purely academic and theoretical, while to-day it is nothing if not practical and experimental.

I can remember learning, though with infinite difficulty, that older form of psychology which was considered suitable as a preparation for the career I was about to enter. Nevertheless, I can truly say that from that day to this I have never made the slightest use of all those wearisome abstractions about Volition, Cognition, and Emotion. They seem to be entirely unrelated to the business of daily life, and to afford little clue to one's own inner problems or to the motives and acts of other people with whom one is called upon to live in amity and tolerant understanding.

Until a few years ago the general public took as little interest in psychology as in bacteriology. As early as 1899 Dr Sigmund Freud of Vienna had propounded and published his theories and his practical experiments in psycho-analysis, but his name was almost unknown outside the medical profession.<sup>1</sup> Then came the Great War,

<sup>1</sup> First English translation of Freud's work, 1913



filling the hospitals of Europe with shattered minds as well as shattered bodies, and in a few months psycho-therapy, the healing of the diseased mind, became the topic of the hour. The names of Freud, Jung, and Adler sprang into fame, and psycho-analysis, already the valued instrument of the psychiatrist, became the rather dangerous plaything of society. From that time onward the subject of psychology ceased to be an academic one, and became of interest to a vast number of ordinary people with no pretensions to learning. It was found to be as practically useful as a telephone or a motor in conducting the affairs of life.

Every one whose daily work brings him into contact with human beings is confronted with psychological problems with which he must endeavour to deal. Why is it that *A*, who is in some respects a most valued assistant, lives under a perpetual cloud of imaginary slights and grievances, and so fails to get on with his colleagues? What is the reason that *B*, who is socially a pleasant and amiable person, metes out a species of petty cruelty to his subordinates? Why do I always irritate *C*, and bring out his worst side? Why does this child who is in my care suffer from alternate fits of sulkiness and excited 'showing off', with no apparent cause? Why does that woman, who

ought to be perfectly strong and well, live the life of a nervous invalid, always tired, always with a headache, cold, or indigestion—fussy, anxious, undecided, and full of self-pity?

These are the questions that daily life brings forward, sometimes about oneself, sometimes about one's associates or fellow workers; and the happiness of a family or of a whole community may depend on whether one has the tact, skill, and knowledge to enable one to deal with them wisely. The reason why it is worth while to know something about modern psychology is that it gives at least a clue to the best way of coping with the everyday problems of clashing personalities

Moreover, we are living at a time when the civilized world, as full as ever it was of disease and neurosis, is losing faith in bottles of medicine. The layman is beginning to realize what many a physician has long known, viz. that drugs are frequently but a means of tinkering with symptoms whose real cause is beyond his reach, and often beyond his power to diagnose. But if we have nothing to substitute for the discredited bottle of medicine, are we not worse off than when simple faith in drugs worked healing?

There are, however, several substitutes gradually making themselves known and felt. The scientific study of food values and of diet in

general, and experimental work in the curative power of relaxation, are beginning to have a marked effect in modifying physical therapy. The remarkable work of Monsieur Coué at Nancy has led to a world-wide interest in self-healing by various methods of auto-suggestion; and similarly the healing power which lies in self-knowledge and self-understanding has been proved beyond dispute by the various schools of psycho-therapy.

The idea of the supreme value of self-knowledge is as old as humanity, and is one of the basic ideas in all the great religions. The extreme difficulty of reaching any useful understanding of the inner workings of one's own mind has always been recognized, and many methods of attaining it have been taught in days of old as well as in modern times. The difficulty consists very largely in the rather surprising fact that introspection *as ordinarily practised* does not lead to self-understanding. On the contrary, introspective people are as a rule more entirely without that capacity than their lighter-hearted brethren, for their aimless brooding upon self is so strongly tinged with emotion that it does not amount to consecutive thought. What the new school of psycho-therapy has discovered is a theory and a practical technique which leads directly to real

self-knowledge, and through it to self-healing. 'Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.'

It is obviously outside the scope of a small book to discuss the relative merits of various schools of analytical psychology, or to go deeply into their origins and technicalities. The question that concerns us is the one so often asked by people who have seen analysis used successfully for healing purposes, but who know little of its principles, viz How can a search into the motives, thoughts, impulses, and emotions of a patient cure him of everyday physical symptoms and obscure mental disabilities?

Every human being is familiar with the fact that there is nothing more exhausting than mental or emotional conflict, the feeling of 'being pulled in two directions at once', and similarly every one recognizes the feeling of relief and relaxation that comes when such conflict is resolved and ceases. We say longingly, 'I don't mind which I do, so long as I can definitely act in one way or the other.' When such conflict is conscious, we generally do arrive at some kind of final decision, which brings it to an end. But psychologists have discovered that the vast majority of us are constantly being pulled in two directions without being aware of the fact.

Human consciousness is a complicated thing. It has been compared to a vast sea in which the glittering surface represents what we commonly call the conscious mind, while the unseen and much larger body of water beneath represents the unconscious. As the under layers of water are constantly mingling with the surface water and changing its content and temperature, so the under layers of unconsciousness are for ever altering and modifying our conscious thoughts and actions

The things that we do consciously are the outcome of a mass of impulses rising from the unconscious. We consciously wash ourselves, and eat, and prepare ourselves for sleep, often when we would much rather not be bothered to perform these actions. We do not consciously argue with ourselves as to why we do so. We know without thinking about it that we must. We read and write consciously, but the complicated process by which we accomplish these things has many years since sunk into our unconsciousness. One realizes this in trying to compose (not copy) a letter on a typewriter when one is not proficient in the art of typing. It is at first almost impossible to do this, because all the conscious attention that one should be giving to composing the letter is being given to striking the right keys and

manipulating the machine. There is a stage in a young child's career when he can write and can also put ideas together, but cannot without endless time and trouble write down his thoughts, because his conscious mind is absorbed in the mechanical difficulty of writing. Again, emotional states in the unconscious often act directly on the conscious mind. People who are martyrs to shyness very often have no realization that it is shyness which makes them in some cases clumsy and tactless, in other cases boisterous and over-familiar.

The content of the unconscious mind is so enormous and so mysterious that psychologists are at a loss to define it. In the early days of psycho-therapy little could be said about it, save that it existed. In recent years much research has been done upon the subject, both by the Freudians and by investigators of other schools, but the outcome of this research is too technical and too complex to be dealt with here.

The unconscious may be said to include all forgotten past experience, and the seeds of all habits of mind and body. It contains all the reasons for our so-called 'instinctive' fears, dislikes, and preferences. Let me take a few everyday examples. You have perhaps some apparently childish but insurmountable dislike to ringing a door-bell. You do not consciously

admit to yourself that you dislike it, because it seems a silly fancy; but all the same, door-bells are things you avoid if you can. A prolonged search in your unconscious mind will perhaps reveal that as a young child you, for example, pulled a door-bell and fell over backwards, hurting yourself, or rang a bell and had the door opened by some one who frightened or scolded you; or rang at the wrong bell by mistake and were severely mortified at your error, as children so often are at blunders of which a grown-up person thinks nothing. You promptly forgot the incident, because we always do tend to forget what is unpleasant, but a vague dislike of door-bells remains in your mind. Or, again, a grown-up woman has an instinctive reaction of fear and violent repulsion at the sound of the heavy flapping of the wings of a large bird. It goes back to a forgotten incident of babyhood, when she was attacked by an angry turkey-cock. Such phobias are very common, and sometimes their origin is completely lost, while in other cases an effort of memory will easily bring it back into consciousness. But it is important to realize that the material of the Freudian unconscious is *by definition* not susceptible of recall by a voluntary effort of recollection. Those fears whose origin we can recall by such an effort cannot, strictly

speaking, be said to form part of the unconscious. This is a very obvious reason why self-analysis is unable to reach the real source of the difficulties and is therefore ineffectual in serious cases where the cause of nervous symptoms is *really* unconscious.

Besides the record of past experience the unconscious mind contains such unadmitted tendencies as greed, vanity, cruelty, and fear of personal danger, in fact all the instincts of which civilized humanity is ashamed.

Now the fact that all normal human beings and possibly many of the higher animals are born with a sense of shame and a desire for self-approval, such as causes them to repudiate many of their thoughts and actions, shows at once that the human mind is not at one with itself. There is something in us which we usually call conscience, but for which psychologists have invented various abstruse terms, and this something acts as a censor within the soul. The power of self-criticism seems to belong partly to the conscious mind and partly to the unconscious. It torments us when we are awake and in full realization of what is happening in our thoughts, many people also feel it in dreams and between waking and sleeping, and experiments have shown that it is strongly present in the hypnotic state. Thus, for example, it is



common for a man who knows he ought to get out of bed at a certain hour to feel a compulsion of conscience which brings him to his feet before he is awake enough to look at his watch or realize his surroundings. McDougall has shown that it requires a very great effort to induce an honest and moral person even when under hypnosis to steal or commit any kind of crime. The resistance of the conscience is still present, though in matters which do not touch the moral sense the person is perfectly ready to obey the will of the hypnotizer. This higher impulse or motivation is considered by some people to come from that element in the unconscious which they distinguish as the super-conscious. Whatever its origin, there is no doubt that it sets up a perpetual conflict in the soul of man, for it is always at war with the lower instincts. There is, of course, nothing new in this idea in so far as it applies to the moral struggles which a man realizes, the everyday effort to do what he knows he ought. What the modern psychologist has to tell us is that these conscious conflicts are of small moment compared with the far greater war carried on permanently in the unconscious mind, giving rise to battles of which we are entirely unaware. It is these battles, says the analyst, that exhaust the vitality and set up ill health and neurosis in the physical body.

As we have seen, conscious conflicts are wearing, but can be ended by a sharp decision in one direction or the other. Those which go on in the unconscious are without end, because they are never brought up for trial and judgment by the will. The analyst's work is to probe the unconscious mind and bring to light the hidden struggle which is sapping the bodily strength. As a rule the patient is then able to face and deal with the trouble, and the consequent relaxation of strain restores to the body its normal vitality. It is, in fact, as if a leak in the main, i e. in our supply of vital energy, had been discovered and stopped.

The sources of these unconscious conflicts are innumerable. Perhaps the commonest is some sort of fear. Fear of disease or accident for oneself or one's family, fear of change, of sin, of poverty, of boredom, of old age, and of death are among the commonest. Most of these we either *suppress*, i e. deliberately refuse to think about, or *repress*, i.e. allow to sink so deeply into the unconscious mind that we are entirely unaware of them. But fear, as is well known, produces mental and physical tension, the mind and body bracing themselves to resist it. This tension produces fatigue, and is one of the chief causes of insomnia. Psycho-analysis brings the cause of fear up into the field of consciousness,

where the victim can face it and deal with it, and an immediate relaxation of nervous and muscular strain ensues. Hence the power of psychotherapy to cure cases of insomnia where drugs fail.

Many treatises on psycho-therapy are written in such a way as would lead us to suppose that the human soul had never found any means of resolving its unconscious discords until Freud, Adler, and Jung propounded their theories to an incredulous and disgusted world. This, of course, is the exaggeration to which ardent followers of great ideas are prone. In point of fact, the perfectly healthy mind deals with its conflicts much as the perfectly healthy body deals with its food, without giving any particular thought to the matter. Less robust or more sensitive mentalities have other more or less satisfactory methods of self-adjustment. For example, religion, philosophy, or hard work may act as palliatives and sometimes as cures. Take, for instance, the religious type of person. Very often his major conflict will be associated with the fear of sin, because he is accustomed to see life in terms of sin and righteousness. Such a man, if he is sincere, will very often find his conflicts resolved by some form of confession. Indeed it is sometimes said that self-examination and confession to a priest should be and

are an adequate substitute for analysis. No doubt in some cases this is so. Given a priest who is a trained analyst, and has unlimited time to put at the disposal of each penitent, and complete freedom of speech on all subjects, the two things might be synonymous. But under ordinary conditions of sacramental confession the position is quite different. To take one point only, our hidden and unconscious fears are by no means necessarily 'sins', and are not therefore regarded as being matter for confession, to God or to a priest. If you were in the habit of going to confession would you confess that you were afraid of dying of cancer because your mother had done so? Most probably you would not realize that you had such a fear, but if you did you would scarcely regard it as a sin!

Be this as it may, the fact remains that the person who is healthy in mind and body has more or less successful ways of dealing with mental conflicts. But one must admit that even under the best circumstances such health is a precarious thing. At any moment an apparently slight extra strain may upset the balance of the normal person, who then becomes unable to adjust himself. When this happens we call it a 'nervous break-down', and doctors prescribe rest and *freedom from worry*. Some victims of this kind of collapse are fortunate

enough to be able to take a 'rest' in the sense of a holiday, but how does a person who is worn out with worry and anxiety set about freeing himself from these torments? It is because he cannot do so that he has collapsed, and in such cases some knowledge of the working of the unconscious mind may be essential to a complete cure.

The foregoing remarks are intended to give to the reader who is entirely new to analytical psychology some idea of how and why analysis is a method of healing. The subsequent chapters of this book are not a study of psycho-therapy from the medical standpoint, but an effort to give some easy and untechnical account of the view that modern analytical psychologists take of the human mind and its workings.

## CHAPTER II

### TERMINOLOGY

ANY science or scientific method which is adopted as a popular craze suffers greatly from the fact that its terminology comes to be very loosely and inaccurately used. Its commoner technical terms take on a colloquial meaning, and become blunted as scientific instruments. This has happened in psycho-therapy, and as a result readers of books on the subject carry away wrong ideas through having previously acquired vague or distorted notions of the meaning of the technical words used therein.

Since this book is intended for the general non-scientific reader, and as an introduction to deeper study of a very large and important subject, it seems well to face this difficulty of terminology at the outset

Recent books on analytical psychology tend to assume in the reader a knowledge of certain elementary terms, and explain and define only in the case of obscure and recondite words. Such expressions as *complex*, *extravert*, *transference* are regarded as part of everyday language. In my experience it is just these everyday words that need careful definition, if they are to retain any scientific usefulness, and

I propose in this chapter to discuss a few of the commonest.

*Complex.*

A complex is a group of ideas of a spontaneous and emotional nature associated by a given individual with a given subject; or, put more simply, a complex is a group of *personal* associations called up in the mind of *A* by the stimulus *X*.

Every human mind is a mass of complexes. We begin in earliest infancy to form emotional associations in relation to every object with which we come in contact, and these become daily larger and more elaborate. Thus a baby sitting on the hearth-rug by the fire watching its food being heated associates *fire* with the pleasure-sensations of *warmth*, *brightness*, and *satisfied hunger*. He burns himself on the fender and adds to his complex the emotional ideas of *pain* and *fear*. Care is taken that he does not hurt himself again, and the pain associations die out, while the pleasure associations are strengthened by daily repetition, until he regains a pleasure-complex in regard to an open fire. Deliberately acquired intellectual ideas about a subject do not form what is technically meant by a complex. What I have learnt intellectually about alcoholism and prohibition does

not constitute my complex on the subject I know that drink causes untold misery and degradation. But my *emotional* association with spirits and wine are a hot drink by the fire after a long day in the open, or the luxury of polished glass and gleaming silver at a dinner-table, and I am the less likely to respond with impassioned enthusiasm to the appeal of the prohibitionist, in that I have a pleasure-complex on the subject which goes deeper than my acquired wisdom

A complex may be a life-long possession, or it may arise and be dispersed in a few hours. Thus the emotional factors which make me desire ardently that the day shall be fine may blind me to unmistakable signs of wetness. For the moment I have a weather-complex, but my faculty for judging weather will return tomorrow when my emotional associations with it have dispersed.

Psycho-therapy is largely concerned with deep-seated pain-complexes. The subjects which are surrounded by such complexes retreat into the unconscious mind and set up conflicts there. The psychiatrist has methods which enable him to detect these subjects, and the violent emotions they arouse when touched upon lead him to an understanding of the patient's unconscious mind. For example, a doctor in treating a child finds that the word *rabbit* touches a strong emotion



in her. He brings to the surface a deeply repressed fear which originated on an occasion when she saw and was horrified by rabbit-shooting. Again, in treating a man, the doctor notices that the words *water*, *lake*, *swim* are complex-indicators, i.e. that they arouse unaccountable emotion. He finds that the patient has been contemplating suicide by drowning.<sup>1</sup>

*Repression and Suppression.*

*Repression* is the non-voluntary driving back into the unconscious of unpleasant complexes; i.e. we repress ideas when we induce forgetfulness of them without deliberate intent. *Suppression* is the deliberate concealment of an emotion. Thus we forget day after day to pay our bills or to answer a tiresome letter, and here we have unconscious repression. But we conceal the fact that we have come downstairs in a very bad temper, or that we are inexpressibly bored by our neighbour's conversation, and this is suppression. Conscious suppression commonly leads by imperceptible degrees into unconscious repression. Thus in the famous investigation of the Chicago murder committed by the boy-criminals Leopold and Loeb, it was found that the youths were abnormally repressed in their

<sup>1</sup> See Hart, *Psychology of Insanity*, Camb. Univ. Press.

emotional reactions, and it was elicited that in early childhood Leopold, a boy of exceptional mentality, had deliberately suppressed his natural emotions of pity, affection, &c, because he found that they interfered with self-gratification. Later in life this suppression became automatic and passed out of his conscious control, thus becoming a repression. But it is equally common for repression to be instantaneous and automatic from the outset.

*Rationalization.*

The emotions aroused by repressed complexes have no reasonable cause in the conscious mind. Thus I have a very strong aversion from my neighbour, Mr. Matthews. There are, in reality, no grounds for my violent dislike, but, hearing accidentally that he treated my acquaintance Thomson rather shabbily in a certain matter, I espouse Thomson's cause with a vigour that secretly surprises myself, and find therein an excellent reason for disliking Matthews. Either I do not notice that my championship of Thomson *follows* my irrational dislike of Matthews, or else I explain this discrepancy by saying that I always knew instinctively that Matthews was an undesirable character. This process of supplying a reasonable cause for an apparently unreasonable emotion is called *rationalization*.

If I could read my own unconscious mind I might discover that Matthews's voice recalled to me the voice of a master at my preparatory school whom I had had good reason to loathe, but whose very existence I had forgotten.

Here is another example. A young man in reduced circumstances is forced to attend a free clinic at a hospital, and is kept waiting for a long time in uncomfortable and sordid surroundings. When at length the doctor sees him, he bursts out into a violent and hysterical tirade against the indifference and brutality exercised by the nurses toward the *poor women and children* waiting at the clinic. The doctor, suspicious of the violence of the emotion shown, and knowing from experience that his out-patients are as a rule humanely and courteously treated, suspects, and succeeds in educating, that the young man's poverty-complex has been rudely touched by the supposed indignity of accepting charitable assistance and being himself kept waiting in discomfort. It should be noted that the doctor concerned in this case was not a cynic, suspicious of all kindly and altruistic feeling in others, but that the hysterical intensity of the emotion exhibited acted as a complex-indicator. There is such a thing as a passion of indignation at political or social abuses or at the sufferings of others. But when we find that a certain

apparently quite impersonal subject always arouses in us an inclination to argue vehemently and hotly and excites our feelings, we do well to look and see what our *personal* associations with this subject are.

### *Resistance.*

Since we repress into the unconscious painful and mortifying experience, we naturally offer *resistance* to any effort to make such experience conscious. A patient who is being analysed often experiences acute emotion because consciously he has an ardent desire to co-operate with the treatment, and when his unconscious resistance is overcome, no matter at what emotional cost, the relief produced by liberation of energy is so great as to make the after-effect one of refreshment rather than fatigue. A person who needs analytic treatment frequently imagines that it is an exhausting process which will interfere with his daily work. In most instances, however, the reverse is the case. His energy is increased, not only as an ultimate but as an immediate result of treatment.

### *Transference.*

The idea embodied in the term *transference* is one which has developed so greatly in recent years that its technical now bears scarcely any

relation to its colloquial use. The popular idea of the analytical transference is still that 'the patient always falls in love with the analyst and thinks everything he says must be right, which, of course, makes it very nice and easy for the analyst'. The actual facts are very different.

In the course of analytical treatment a good deal of old and forgotten emotional experience comes to the surface, connected with people who have been of significance to the patient in the past—parents, brothers and sisters, nurses, teachers. As these old associations come up the analysand finds himself feeling for the analyst—quite unconsciously—the emotions felt in past times toward this or that person. Thus at one time the analyst represents the father, at another time the school-teacher, or the nurse—and the patient feels jealous love, or irritated impotent rebellion, or an expectation of protection and petting, according to the role of the moment. The 'transference', then, is the transferring to the analyst of emotion left over from some earlier unsatisfied relationship, and present-day methods of analysis are largely concerned with analysing and making conscious the transference itself. This process, in proportion as it is successful, has the twofold effect of freeing the patient from the trammels of his old unsatisfied

emotions, and of freeing him from his phantasied dependence on the analyst.

The latest view of the transference, or the relation between analyst and patient, is that it constitutes an actual relationship, albeit a professional one, and that as the patient gradually recognizes the real link between himself and some one who has given him great help in finding an adjustment to life, and becomes independent of this relationship, he actually 'grows up', reaches the stature of the adult human being, and so develops normal healthy-mindedness.

### *Phantasy.*

The term *phantasy* is much used in analytical psychology, and the fact that its technical meaning differs subtly from its colloquial one leads to some confusion. A phantasy is a day-dream in which desire, unfulfilled in the world of reality, finds an imaginary fulfilment or satisfaction. The world of phantasy stands over against the world of reality. The completely sane and balanced mind recognizes phantasy for what it is, and either tries to convert it into reality, or else deliberately uses it as a harmless amusement and relaxation. Most people, however, are only partially successful in recognizing and dealing with it. Some, whom we call unbalanced or insane, fail entirely to distinguish between the

dream and the business. The child who sees himself as Buffalo Bill scouring the plains on a bucking broncho, or as Peter Pan fighting with Captain Hook, is compensating himself in day-dream for the restrictions and disabilities of childhood. Many of us, in these days of rush and noise and exacting responsibility, compensate ourselves by dreaming that, in one way or another, we are 'off with the rattle-taggle gipsies, oh!' Such phantasies are, for the ordinary person, mere harmless amusements, although in the mind of genius they may germinate, and inspire great imaginative works of art. Neither we nor the children take them altogether literally. But the newly arrived office-boy, who looked along the row of clerks and accountants in the big office and exclaimed, 'Gee, is all dem guys ahead of me fer president', was day-dreaming with a difference, for in his dream were the seeds of a possible reality. The one-pointed, deliberately intended phantasy is the most valuable thing a child or youth can possess. Thus the biography of Garfield (*From Log Cabin to White House*) tells how a peasant boy's vision of himself as President of the United States became an actuality, and the lives of Clive, Columbus, and Booker Washington supply similar examples. On the other hand, the vague aspiration to 'do something big some day' en-

genders a habit of obtaining satisfaction through ambitious dreams, which is the most insidious and dangerous of all foes to attainment ✓

The study of folk-lore from the point of view of racial phantasy is a new branch of research possessing extraordinary interest. The youngest son who outwits the elder ones, the ugly duckling who outshines his more beautiful companions, Cinderella down-trodden and triumphant, Little Klaus who gets the better of Great Klaus, Hop o' My Thumb who acquires seven-leagued boots—such phantasies occur in the national tales of all peoples, because the young nation and the young individual always feel inferiority and compensate for it in imagination.

### *Libido*

Originally this term was used by Freud and his followers to designate sexual hunger or the mental aspect of the sexual instinct. As knowledge and experience have advanced the term has taken on a wider significance, and is now very commonly, though not invariably, used to mean the total life-energy or vital impetus of the individual—the current in which his thoughts, desires, and tendencies inevitably flow.

### *Intróversion and Extraversion.*

Speaking in a summary fashion, an introvert is a person whose libido or life-force is turned



inward; an extravert one whose libido is turned outward.

In the earlier days of analytical therapy the ideas underlying these two terms were considered to be basic and of great importance, and it was customary to regard 'the introvert' and 'the extravert' as hard-and-fast types. At the present day the classification is still regarded as valid, but of less importance. Although there are a great many examples to be met with of human beings who do conform strictly to one or other of the types, there are as many in whom the two are blended, and are seen as alternating phases of development. The terms are dealt with rather fully here, because, though no longer of primary importance to the analyst, they are useful in a general way and have found their way into current speech.

The extravert goes out to people and things, enjoying contacts and shrinking from solitude and meditation. The introvert shrinks from and instinctively avoids contact with the external world, is reserved, unsociable, self-sufficing. Looked at superficially the extravert is like a fox-terrier, busy, friendly, inquisitive, bustling about and taking an excited sniff at everybody and everything; while the introvert is the cat who scorns to mix himself with other people's concerns, and prefers to 'walk by himself' or

to sit and 'contemplate the Absolute Mouse'. But the dog and cat simile, which has been used so often to illustrate these two psychological types, will not bear close inspection or minute elaboration; for the introverted human being is by no means necessarily a self-absorbed egoist, nor is extraversion synonymous with sympathy, affection, and willing service.

The extravert has his attention fixed on the objective world. People and things mean much to him. He hates to have his furniture moved from the spot where he has been accustomed to find it, he is a prey to anxiety if his customary daily companions, his family or his friends, are temporarily out of his reach. He is obsessed with the fear that burglars will choose his house for their operations, and that the trains in which his family travel will be wrecked. He enjoys action, is restless under forced passivity. He sees his external goal clearly, and does not greatly heed the interests of other people when they impede his progress. One pronounced extravert in a family will often fill the house both physically and spiritually to such an extent that his brothers and sisters are almost crowded out of existence. Nevertheless, his interest in other people and his power of expressing sympathy may be so great that he attracts friends and hangers-on in great numbers.

To the introvert the external world means in comparison very little. He has no *flair* in dealing with it. He commonly cherishes a longing to be rid of all possessions. This is usually merely a phantasy with him, but it is symptomatic. He can live in an ugly and inharmonious room without noticing it. He may even be indifferent to his landlady's mural decorations and aspilistras. He has not the burglar phantasy nor the railway-accident phobia. He feels that his possessions are replaceable if lost, and that his friends are on the whole just as safe when out of sight as when present. His fear, *though he seldom becomes conscious of it*, is that he will lose touch with reality and the external world. He may be haunted by a vague phantasy that perhaps he is insane and that no one has discovered it. He is afraid to meet strangers, but he is terrified that unless he overcomes his shrinking he will become friendless and go mad. His characteristic form of nightmare is that he is climbing up a flight of stairs, on and on, but the upper end of the staircase is suspended in space, and the steps he has already ascended crumble into nothingness as his foot leaves them. Or he is in an upper room, and knows that the staircase by which he reached it is rotten and will collapse if he attempts to descend. These dreams are symbolical of his unconscious fear that he may become entirely

dissociated from external reality. He is self-critical, undecided in action because mistrustful of his own judgement, he is considerate for other people, and has insight into their difficulties, because he sees in imagination how his own actions affect others. He likes change of scene and occupation because he finds in them a needed stimulus towards interest in the outer world.

Extremes of extraversion or introversion are dangerous, and the instinct of self-preservation prompts mankind to seek after balance. The extravert has in him an insatiable craving after quiet, repose, and the ability to find pleasure apart from the outer world, while the introvert has a constant urge towards means of contact with the outer. In the normal person of either type these cravings find satisfaction, and some sort of balance is achieved. Hence the pure type, often clearly discernible in childhood and youth, tends to become greatly modified as life and education go on. Where there is failure to strike anything approaching a balance, some form of nervous disability tends to set in. This may become what is known as insanity, and while more often it does not go beyond the stage of mental eccentricity or physical invalidism, it invariably results in serious incompetence of one kind or another.

*Fixation.*

The term fixation is used to denote the mental state which occurs when an individual refuses to take the step forward in life which normal development demands

The commonest form of fixation is that of the child upon the parent. Just as the infant tends to resist the physical process of weaning, so the growing child and youth tends to demand or accept mental and spiritual sustenance and support from the parent long after the need should have been outgrown. A generation or two ago this unhealthy dependence took the form of deference and submission<sup>1</sup>. The middle-aged spinster who could take no smallest step unaided, but must needs first 'ask mamma', has given place to the girl who expects to be spoilt, waited on, and sheltered from hardship by unwisely self-abnegating parents for many years beyond the time when such protection is legitimate or healthful.

Parent-fixation occurs in a more subtle but equally common way among adults who have long since left the parental home and become outwardly self-supporting and independent. The type of man who tacitly expects his wife to be a mother to him, or who holds up his mother as

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ch. VII, p. 143 et seq.

a model to the woman he has married, is still in his unconscious mind an immature 'mother-baby'. Parent fixation in adults may be the result of the lingering on of a too childish kind of affection, but is more often due to a mingling in the unconscious of attachment with fear. Thus a woman's attitude to men in general may be coloured by a repressed fear of her father, dating from babyhood. Brought into consciousness this fear may be found to derive from some infantile panic, and will at once be eradicated in the adult mind, a gradual readjustment to the male sex taking place as a result. Speaking generally, fixation is the negation of all progress; it is a futile attempt to resist the universal law of 'change, which is life'.

### *Regression.*

This term indicates the retreat of the personality which occurs when a person is unable to face a given situation. Mild cases of regression are met with every day. The little girl who finds she is outgrowing the stage when her mother can protect her from all unpleasant contacts with the outside world puts her finger in her mouth and pouts and 'talks baby-talk' in order to escape from what she dislikes. She has 'regressed' into infantility. The young man who refuses to interest himself in anything but cricket-scores,

and evades the choice of a profession, is regressing into boyhood because manhood seems to him difficult. Such a man is considered as an unsatisfactory member of society, but if regression goes farther, as in the case of Mr Dick in *David Copperfield*, who went back permanently to the kite-flying stage, it is regarded as insanity. One of the most famous cases of regression is that of an Australian soldier who during the Great War suffered from shell-shock. A large and robust fellow of twenty-five or so, he 'went back' to the age of about eighteen months, crawling on all fours, making gurgling sounds instead of speech, playing with picture-books, and delighting in pictures of animals, which he designated as 'gee-gees', 'moo-cows', &c.

### *Identification*

Identification is the associating of oneself with the acts or experiences of another in such a way that one participates in the emotions or sensations. One imagines that other to be feeling. The person who sees an accident in the street and experiences such acute emotion that he faints or is rendered incapable of movement is *unconsciously* imagining himself to be the victim of the accident. He is identifying himself with the injured person. This feeling is often mistaken for keen sympathy, but is in reality

a kind of phantasy. The same sort of identification occurs when we blush with shame and discomfort at the sight of another person committing an act of folly or exhibiting unseemly emotion. Thus an Englishman may feel acute discomfort at the sight of two Frenchmen meeting and embracing, although he knows perfectly well that the custom is a normal one and arouses no such feeling in the Frenchman's mind.

*Projection.*

Projection is the reverse of identification. It is the act of unconsciously attributing to another our own thoughts, feelings, or motives. The young man who was so indignant at the discomfort of the women and children who were kept waiting at the clinic was projecting his own irritation and sense of indignity on to them. The reason why quarrels between people often result in such hopeless entanglement is that each person is apt to project on to the other all his emotions, and so attributes to the other the statements that he has in reality made himself. In newspaper accounts of divorce cases one is struck by the fact that each party accuses the other of cruelty, neglect, ill treatment of children, extravagance, and so forth.



*Masochism and Sadism.*

Masochism is a technical term meaning love of self-torture, or a voluptuous enjoyment of mental or bodily pain.

Sadism is the voluptuous pleasure derived from inflicting pain or witnessing the infliction of pain on others.

Both masochism and sadism are regarded by psychologists as being unhealthy manifestations of the sexual instinct.

*Amnesia.*

Amnesia is a localized defect of memory, often caused by violent repression of an unpleasant experience,<sup>1</sup> e.g. it frequently happens that a man suffering from shell-shock loses his memory of what immediately preceded the shock.

*Trauma.*

Trauma is a morbid condition produced by physical or mental shock. The education of a girl was frustrated by the fact that whenever the first day of school term arrived she was attacked by violent sickness, recurring as often as lessons were resumed. Physical treatment by various specialists proved useless. Finally under mental treatment the girl produced from her unconscious the memory of how, on the day

<sup>1</sup> See p 178.

she went for the first time to a kindergarten, her brother, a medical student, took her up to a dark attic where he had suspended a skeleton, the sight of which terrified her into sudden sickness. The incident had been repressed and therefore forgotten, but the association between sickness and school remained, and gave rise to the distressing results from which she had suffered for years. As soon as these facts were elicited the trouble ceased. Such complete repression of the cause of a trauma is by no means rare.

## CHAPTER III

### INSTINCTIVE ENERGY

THE earliest publications dealing with psycho-analysis were those of Dr Sigmund Freud, the famous Viennese psychiatrist, and the practical experience of this great pioneer led him to believe that the fundamental driving-power of humanity, the prime factor in all psychology, was the sexual instinct. He expounded or expressed his theories in such a way as to offend the moral sense of most people who studied his books. When he made such statements as that the infant male child was 'in love with' its mother and 'jealous of' its father, his words were taken in a too literal sense. The adult reader of Freud's works imagined him to be speaking of love, jealousy, sex, &c, as they exist in adult consciousness, whereas infant consciousness and child consciousness are profoundly different from ours, and have different manifestations. If Freud had said that an infant is filled with desire for its mother's undivided attention and resents any one or anything that interferes with this attention, every one with a knowledge of young children would have agreed as a matter of course. When he wrote of the small boy as wishing to 'murder' his father in order to be the

sole object of his mother's love, the reader was filled with horror, quite forgetting that any child in a burst of anger will scream at his nurse or mother, 'Go away, I hate you, I'll kill you', and by 'kill' simply means 'get rid of'. He has no conception of murder as grown-up people envisage it. In his fairy stories any one who happens to be in the way is cheerily and light-heartedly 'killed' by the hero, and that is the end of it. But the manner in which Freud expressed his ideas filled people's minds with the lurid horrors of incest and parricide, and made them turn away indignantly from his generalizations

The actual cases which Freud cites in his books are indeed full of vice and morbid perversion, because his work as a mental specialist brought him into contact with acutely unbalanced people, and it was upon his study of such people that he founded his general theories of human psychology. He endeavoured to trace back the mental processes of the vicious and perverted in order to find the seed or germ from which their aberrations sprang, and he concluded that the primitive urge, which in adults finds expression as the sexual instinct, shows itself in embryonic form in quite young children.

A little later than Freud came Dr Adler, who maintained that the primary human motive is

not sexual desire, but the desire for power. Dr. Jung of Zurich, originally a pupil of Freud's, endeavoured to harmonize the theories of his two predecessors, and to extend the whole conception of the unconscious mind, unifying under Freud's term *libido* all instinctive energy and not merely that of sex.

For some years the followers of Freud, Adler, and Jung spent much energy in trying to prove one another to be wrong, each maintaining that his teacher had, as it were, the monopoly of truth. But the test of time is beginning to show that all three great men were right, and that each was merely looking at truth from a different angle.

Jung's conception of *libido* as instinctive energy, the general force that is sometimes called the will-to-live, has been received favourably by many of the later students of psycho-analysis, and it is the one which I have adopted in this book. It is in accordance with the findings of modern scientific research, and also with old-established theories of the human soul, to regard all activity in the animal, vegetable, and perchance even the mineral world, as deriving from one source<sup>1</sup>. We see plants bursting through

<sup>1</sup> According to an Eastern saying, the life energy 'sleeps in the mineral, dreams in the plant, wakes in the animal, and becomes conscious in man'.

an asphalt pavement and contorting themselves in every way in order to maintain existence, and animals and men performing similar miracles of adaptation, living under intolerable conditions of mind and body, and yet preferring instinctively to 'go on' Whatever may be the nature of the mysterious Force which gives life to the universe, we can at least postulate of It that It has the will to persist in whatever form It may have chosen as a means of manifestation That Force, when manifested in the individual, we propose to call *libido* or instinctive energy

When we so define libido, we ought to realize that we are speaking of what many Christians would call the Holy Spirit A well-known Christian hymn to the Third Person of the Trinity runs as follows

Bounteous Spirit, ever shedding  
 Life the world to fill'  
 Swarms, the fruitful globe o'erspreading  
 Shoals, their ocean pathway treading,  
 Own Thy quickening thrill,  
 Author of each creature's birth,  
 Life of life beneath the earth,—  
 Everywhere, O Spirit blest,  
 Thou art motion, Thou art rest,

and these words are a good metrical description of the psychologist's 'life-force' or 'instinctive energy'.

For the sake of clearness let us regard this force for the moment as a stream, the stream of life. The metaphor is a familiar one, and all the better for that. In every human being this stream tends to flow outward through the self or ego, striving to express itself in the world around it. Self-expression is a fundamental law—the same law by which the bird ‘presses out’ from the egg, the moth from the chrysalis, the child from the womb. But in no human being does this vital energy flow smoothly and unhindered. Always the stream-bed is scattered with obstacles which check and dam it back, and on the seriousness of these obstacles and the capacity of the person to deal with them are dependent his physical and mental health.

This stream of energy is fundamentally and essentially creative. Its nature is such that it must go out to the external world, unite with it and in some way mould it. A baby banging a toy drum is satisfied because it has made an effective link between itself and the drum, and out of that is producing a noise. During the ecstasy of noise-making it is ‘in love with’ the drum. The poet merges his being in an experience and in the creative act of expressing it in terms of words, sound, and rhythm. Every artist, every true craftsman, every player of a game of skill, every one who has organized or

'made', knows the four sequential stages of creative activity: first the desire or urge for expression, then a slow blending or uniting of the self with the material, then a period of struggle for mastery, and finally an ecstatic moment of achievement and release.

It is obvious that for humanity at large the easiest and most satisfying way of obtaining the necessary outlet for creative energy is through sex, and it is for this reason that sex is such a dominant factor in human life. It is possible that if humanity were so far evolved that full creative experience were easily obtainable at other levels than the physical, such as the emotional or mental, the over-emphasis on sex from which the race is suffering at its present stage might become adjusted.

Inherent in any satisfaction which comes from the release of creative energy is the sense of overcoming obstacles, and this delight in overcoming is what gives zest to all human activities. Employments and amusements in which it is lacking pall and become monotonous. Whether it be in cleaning a house, planning a garden, playing football, or painting a picture, the problem to be solved or the obstacle to be surmounted is basically 'part of the fun'. Expressed in terms of psychology, it is necessary that the life-force should be dammed back in order that a need for



release may be consciously felt. The satisfaction in release is then acute and adequate.

Hence the fact that the stream-bed along which the life-force must flow is full of obstructions, or, to leave the metaphor, the fact that the circumstances of human existence are always intricate and full of problems, is not deplorable but essential to evolution. We read in our school-books of the savage in tropical conditions for whom all the needs of life are at hand, and who sinks into luxurious indolence instead of striving after self-improvement! The said savage is to a great extent a pedagogical myth, but the moral pointed by his slothful existence is sound. Nevertheless, at the present stage of human evolution the obstacles to the flow of life-force are such that a very large number—probably it would be true to say the majority—of civilized human beings are permanently inhibited by them, and never succeed in releasing anything approaching the full or normal amount of vital energy. The process by which it comes to pass that so few people are able to live to their full capacity, with stable physical and mental health, is explained by the analytical schools of therapy somewhat as follows.

The current of out-flowing libido or vital energy is in all cases checked in earliest infancy by various combinations of adverse circum-

stances, it may be of a comparatively trifling or of an overwhelming nature. As no one can be experimentally certain of what infant consciousness is like, there are a number of divergent theories as to the nature of infantile traumas. Freud has never really departed from his early conviction that these are of a sexual nature and connected wholly with the relation of the infant to the parents. Adler holds that they are the outcome of weakness and inferiority, and inability to control external circumstances. Rank, originally a Freudian, but at the present day a leader in his own line of investigation, maintains that birth itself, the separation of the infant from the mother, involving the necessity of facing independent existence, is the first of the great shocks that the human being has to endure and cope with; and that many people reach physical maturity without having really surmounted this first obstacle.<sup>1</sup> In a book of this nature it is not possible to discuss this intricate and subtle question of infantile trauma. It will be sufficiently obvious that inherent conditions do exist at birth with which the infant must needs endeavour to cope; such conditions as an over-susceptible nervous system, or inability to assimilate food are common enough examples.

<sup>1</sup> See *The Trauma of Birth*, by Otto Rank (Pub. Kegan Paul).

During the pre-adolescent years of childhood fresh obstacles will necessarily be met with, and these almost inevitably supplement or accentuate the partially overcome infantile difficulties. Thus the baby who was 'difficult to rear' on account of delicacy may develop into the puny boy unable to share his brothers' amusements, or the plain 'whiney' little girl who is a failure when there are visitors, or the spoilt mother's darling incapable of developing normal independence. Or again, a healthy and normal infant girl may have the birth-condition of being unwanted by a mother whose sole ambition is to rear sons. It is impossible to say how early this condition begins to act on the child, but most people who have had much to do with infants would probably agree that the unwanted child is at a real disadvantage from birth. In the pre-adolescent stage if some further condition of 'unwantedness' arises, such as is afforded by an unsympathetic nurse or governess, or the loss of even a modicum of the mother's attention through sickness or separation, the original damming back of life-force is increased by a second and more formidable barrier.

The third period, which is that of adolescence and school life, is crucial in proportion as early childhood has been free or inhibited; for whereas the conditions of childhood are likely to reinforce

those of birth and infancy, this third phase is not entirely dependent on home conditions, and may be of a wholly different nature. It is almost proverbial that the home-failure is the school success, and if school life gives scope and freedom to the hitherto inhibited child, he may at least partially break down the barriers built up previously, and the rush of energy that comes with healthy adolescence may under good conditions be sufficient to sweep away earlier obstacles. On the other hand, if school life intensifies feelings of inferiority, privation, and anxiety which have arisen in babyhood, the fourth or adult stage is bound to be one of maladaptation to environment, full of fear and anxiety, and lacking in ease of contact.

This fourth critical period occurs when school life comes to an end, and grown-up life has to be faced. It is one of peculiar difficulty, because it involves a return to home and social conditions to which is added the necessity of somehow making an independent life. The qualities of leadership and intellectual or athletic prowess which made the closing years of school life so successful and glorious are at a heavy discount, and resentment at personal unimportance, everyday drudgery, and the need for congenial social adaptation is acute. The refusal or incapacity to face these conditions often

impedes development for years, and sometimes arrests it for life.

If at these various critical points in early life the obstacles are so great that the damming back of the life-stream is cumulative, then in later life natural and spontaneous self-adjustment is rarely possible. The amount of energy and creative force which, as it were, trickles through the barrier is insufficient to cope with the present, not to speak of overcoming the past obstructions. If the dam across the stream becomes impenetrable, so that all the energy is turned inward and expended in phantasy, we get what is called insanity. The subject lives in a dream and cannot be reached by the outside world. His phantasy that he is a king or a demigod or an outlaw surrounded by scheming enemies becomes for him reality. Such illusions are not haphazard inventions of the diseased mind. The woman who believes that she is made of Dresden china and will crack if rudely handled is probably retreating from a world whose hard knocks have been too much for her.

The human being who is able to adjust the flow of his energy so that it surmounts every obstacle is not as yet met with in our everyday civilization. Between the relatively free, healthy, and adequate individual at one end of the scale, and the almost entirely blocked person who is

definitely abnormal in mind or body or both at the other end, there exist an infinite variety of more or less unhappy, more or less ill, more or less unsatisfied human beings whom we are obliged to call normal, and it is with these that this book is mainly concerned.

Throughout life, but more especially at the critical phases of life which have been indicated, the human being is presented with problems and conditions which cause him to feel fear, anxiety, and a general sense of insecurity and conflict. Fear and anxiety are interior states which prevent us from making easy contact with the world of external reality, and drive us into a world of phantasy where we find illusory satisfaction. The child's games of make-believe where he is father or mother or teacher or an Indian chief are his way of compensating for the fact that real life is anxious and frightening. If he were teacher or father, so he fancies, the outside world would lie in the hollow of his hand and fear would be no more. In this whole complex question of obstructed life-force, fear and anxiety are basic factors, and it is necessary to understand in some detail how they affect human development.

The easiest and the most useful approach for the ordinary reader to this intricate subject of analytical psychology is the practical one, that

of observing typical cases in everyday life which illustrate analytical theory. For this purpose one must be content with examining some of the more obvious manifestations of the effect of inhibition and repression, and these more obvious cases are, as Freud and Adler discovered, usually concerned either with the sexual life or with the love of power, two aspects of the life-force which are closely interwoven with each other, and yet clearly distinguishable in a variety of ordinary human types. Subtler manifestations involving other forms of distortion are as common, but are less simple and striking to the untrained observer. For these reasons I propose in the following chapters to deal mainly with the subject of fear and with certain typical cases of inhibition due to the distortion of sex and power urges.

This brings us to the point where we see that freedom from fear and an adequate outlet for vital energy are a *sine qua non*, if the human being is to develop healthily and normally in mind and body. The extent to which natural outlet and freedom from fear are easily obtainable differs greatly in different states of society, and in various types of civilization.

It might be thought that this freedom necessarily existed in a high degree among all primitive peoples, and that fears and inhibitions sprang

up, multiplied, and became more and more rigid with the advance of civilization. But the research of modern anthropologists has shown that the truth is by no means as simple as this. To begin with, the laws and customs of primitive man differ widely from one community to another. It is as difficult to generalize about him as it is about the civilized races of the world. As a rule, in so far as there is any rule, the savage has outlets and inhibitions not very dissimilar to our own, though more primitive in actual incidence. Thus, as regards the love of power, he obtains his superiority in such ways as by the accumulation of wealth, by social distinction, by physical prowess, or by learning. The fact that his wealth may be expressed in terms of yams, his physical prowess in head-hunting rather than football, and his learning in a knowledge of black magic, makes no fundamental difference. His ambitions and desires are thwarted or stimulated as ours are by convention, custom, rivalry, and jealousy. His fears are more paralysing than ours. Where we dread poverty, disease, or starvation, he lives in terror of magic, the mysterious and incalculable source of the greater part of his misfortunes, and a power against which he can do little or nothing.

As regards sexual expression, he may be better off or worse off than ourselves according to



circumstances. He is worse off in that he has no understanding at all of the physiology of the sexual or of any other bodily functions. He is restrained and restricted quite as much as we are by marriage laws, those of incest and of the 'prohibited degrees' being often more complicated and more rigorous than our own. Nevertheless, recent research among savage tribes tends to show that there are certain communities where liberty and lack of sexual repression much more complete than that found in any civilized society exist, together with a complete absence of hysterical and nervous disorders. A well-known anthropologist engaged in research among the Melanesians gives an interesting description of two island communities that he was able to observe.<sup>1</sup> In one of these there was complete sexual freedom and lack of reticence from babyhood until marriage, and here the investigator found 'not a single man or woman who was hysterical or neurasthenic'. Nervous tics, compulsory actions, obsessive ideas, were wholly absent. They were a gay, hearty, open set of people. The other community, living on an island some thirty miles distant, similar in race and language to the first, had a different social organization, strict morality from

<sup>1</sup> B Malinowski, *Sex and Repression in Savage Society* (Pub. Kegan Paul, 1927).

childhood onwards being expected, and sexual licence as well before as after marriage being looked on askance. Here the impression given was that of 'a community of neurasthenics', a shy, distrustful, and secretive people, extremely nervous with strangers and easily cowed. There may have been many causes for this contrast in character and temperament, but the corresponding difference in sexual custom is significant

That licence should produce a healthy community and sexual restraint a morbid one may seem a repellent idea. But it must be remembered that the sane and adequate handling of the primitive instincts is the hardest lesson man has to learn, and the fact that his early efforts toward self-control should have apparently bad results does not go to prove that self-control is undesirable, but merely that it is a difficult and delicate task.

The human being living in the midst of modern civilization is, of course, a much more complicated psychological organism than the savage; indeed it is only in recent years that psychologists have come to realize that the fundamental impulses which make up so large a part of the life of primitive man are also the hidden driving force behind civilization.

The will-to-live, or, as it is more commonly

expressed, the instinct of self-preservation, is as strong in us as it is in the savage—stronger perhaps, because we have a more vivid imagination. We cannot prevent the impulse to take care of ourselves first, any more than we can help blinking at a flash of light. We can and very commonly do refuse to act on such an impulse, and the sordid maxim, 'Safety first', makes small appeal to a decent man or woman. Nevertheless, I have heard one of the greatest of men and most devoted of fathers tell how, when he and his child were within an ace of being run over, his *instantaneous* reaction was to jump back himself first and then pull the child after him. The higher impulse of self-sacrifice may and often does follow so quickly on the first instinct that none but a practised observer of self will realize that it is, after all, the trained and not the spontaneous reaction.

But the will-to-live includes far more than the instinct which prompts us to escape from sudden danger. The problem of finding food and shelter, the struggle to avoid illness, discomfort, and pain, are all more or less directly associated with it, and the difficulty which we civilized people have to face is that we are no more masters of our fate in these directions than is the savage. Questions of wage-earning, security of employment, all the horrors of a competitive

industrial and commercial system—these are monsters against which the ordinary man dare not risk single combat any more than the savage dare defy priestcraft and black magic. Again, though in a sense knowledge is power, in another sense it is fear. What we know of disease, and what we think we know of its causes, such as heredity and infection, adds a thousand terrors to the lives of some of us, terrors of which the savage in his ignorance has no conception.

But how do we treat these fears against which we can take no specific action? Every one knows the answer to that question. We ‘dismiss them from our minds’ because they are unpleasant and depressing; and we rather pride ourselves on our self-control in so doing. We *talk* about dismissing a thing from our minds, but what is it that we really do? Once we know a thing we cannot unknow it, so what becomes of it when we refuse to think about it? Dismissed from consciousness it becomes part of the content of the unconscious mind, and there it sets up a conflict which, so long as it is unresolved, constitutes a source of nervous strain. If circumstances render this conflict urgent and acute, the unconscious mind will provide some sort of a solution, i.e. either an entirely irrational one, or else one that is a mere temporary evasion. An irrational outlet for repressed anxiety may take the form of

nervous fidgeting, unconscious spasmodic jerking of the head or limbs, or irritability of temper. As an example of futile evasion, take the case of a man in hospital who knows that when he comes out he will have lost his job. He is afraid to face this situation, and dismisses it from his mind for the present. He does not consciously say to himself, 'I cannot face the world, so I will not get better', for reason tells him that that is an unworthy and foolish manner of dealing with the situation. But the unconscious or semi-conscious conflict becomes so acute that a solution is imperative, and the mind then works on the body in such a way as to cause the symptoms of illness to persist. This is not deliberate malingering, but an unconscious refusal to face reality.

Similarly a child's toothache may be an unconscious evasion of school examinations. This connexion may be perfectly clear to the grown-up person, but the mistake usually made is to suppose therefore that the toothache is a sham. Tell the child so, and you make the toothache worse, because you promptly supply his unconscious mind with an additional reason for having the pain, viz. to evade the mortification of being convicted of malingering<sup>1</sup>. As Coué has shown the world, the power of the unconscious mind over the body is enormous.

<sup>1</sup> Cf pp. 72, 73.

The symptoms that it produces are just as real as those of measles or mumps. In the case of a child it is usually quite easy to express sympathy for the ailment and then tactfully to elicit the unconscious cause. When this is done the ailment will disappear of itself.

Fears tend to dam the libido at its source, but the civilized man who is comparatively free from dread of starvation, disease, and death may still be without any adequate channels of expression for his creative energy. The same force that makes a man want to live makes him also crave to exert his strength of body or mind. He desires irresistibly to show his superiority over something, to mould something to his will. In the savage this instinct leads to development of muscular prowess, to constant warfare, to excessive cruelty to helpless captives, and to puerile display. The young brave is required to endure torture and to exhibit his skill as a warrior before he is admitted to full membership of the tribe. In the civilized community wealth, high position, rank, and political office take the place of the savage's ambitions, though even there athletic prowess remains one great means of establishing superiority.

Love of power is very clearly displayed by all children. The baby who bangs his spoon on his plate, throws his toy down on the floor

as fast as his nurse can pick it up, or pulls off again and again the sock his patient mother has put on, is merely saying, 'See how powerful I am!' The small boy who dons his sword and helmet and prances about beating his drum is dreaming that he is superior to all the world, or will be some day. The little girl who delights in a waterproof coat and rubber boots, and makes for the deepest puddles, is showing her power over rain and wetness, which she has been taught to regard as enemies.<sup>1</sup>

The child who is provided with no adequate outlet for proving his superiority, who is too tightly held in, has wild outbursts of temper, breaks things, and defies the world. The girl who has ugly clothes and feels herself neglected and unimportant gets her superiority by imagining that she is a princess in disguise, and will one day have the world at her feet, or that she is not really the daughter of her humble parents and will shortly be reclaimed by her long-lost noble sire; or again, she may get it by bullying people smaller than herself.

The man or woman who lives in a so-called civilized modern community has, in the majority of cases, very little outlet for this love of power. The man is in a subordinate position and not his

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the admirable studies of childhood in D. Canfield's *The Brimming Cup*.

own master; his daily work is likely to be monotonous and to require no initiative. The woman lives in a small house, and has few outside interests. How do such ordinary people as ourselves get a sense of superiority? In too many cases not by any legitimate means. Gossiping gives us a sense of power and superiority over our neighbours. Drinking makes us feel for the moment that we own the world, and bullying the wife or children who may be at our mercy is another great relief to this thwarted desire for superiority. In<sup>1</sup> a clever novel by G. B. Stern,<sup>1</sup> a husband whose wife is a rich and famous actress finds the only outlet for his will-to-power in making fretwork ornaments, and the child of this same famous mother gets her sense of superiority and importance by becoming an interesting nervous wreck.

Finally, how is the civilized man placed in regard to the instinct for reproduction, or the sexual instinct? Again very badly. The sexual instinct develops in him five or ten years before it can find any normal, legitimate outlet, and looms abnormally large in his life, partly because civilized people dwell *in thought* on the ideas of love and marriage far more than do those of primitive races, and partly because the habits of civilized life, abundant food, soft living, and

<sup>1</sup> *The Back Seat*, by G. B. Stern. See also p. 139



comparative absence of need for bodily exertion, stimulate sexual desire. Men, and still more women, may have to spend many years or a lifetime in dealing with this fundamental natural instinct as best they can, without the opportunity for legitimate physical expression.

The case, then, for civilized man looks very black. It is obvious that all these more or less inhibited or repressed desires and instincts must set up violent conflicts, and if conflict produces neurosis one may ask why the majority of civilized human beings are not nervous wrecks. The answer is that man has apparently almost unlimited capacity for adaptation to circumstances. Just as he is the only animal that can live in every condition of climate and on almost every kind of food, so also he has the power of adapting himself to an infinite variety of mental and moral difficulties. Denied the natural and primitive outlet for his energies, he is quick to devise others which will answer the purpose. Psychologists have found that in so far as these outlets are satisfactory, so far will the man or woman be physically and mentally a healthy member of society. A satisfactory outlet is spoken of technically as a *sublimation*. The question of how the natural desires can best be sublimated is a wide and difficult one, but simple instances of sublimation are of such

everyday occurrence that we can all recognize and understand them. Thus it is well known in these days that boys and girls need plenty of outdoor games and vigorous physical exercise, and that mooning about is bad for them and makes them troublesome; in other words, that the current of vital force which impels them to exert their power and superiority must have a suitable outlet provided or it will find an undesirable one. In recent years it has been realized that while games are, in childhood and youth, a fairly adequate outlet for the desire for power, they are not sufficiently constructive and creative to form a satisfactory sublimation for the sexual instinct as it begins to mature.<sup>1</sup> Hence in modern schools we have workshops in which children are taught to use their creative vigour in designing and making. It is not an accidental coincidence that we find the most successful co-educational schools developing extensively the teaching of handicrafts, for where boys and girls are brought up together in large numbers every possible opportunity for sublimation is needed.

The value of the power to sublimate the instinctual desire lies in this, that the necessity for doing so gradually uplifts man from a life of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the account of the place of football in a boy's life in D. Canfield's *Rough-hewn*.

selfish gratification of the senses to the heights of creative skill which we call art, and to the heights of altruism which we call sainthood. Eventually he finds, not a poor substitute for his personal desires, but something infinitely more valuable to himself and to the world.

This conflict, about which we have already said a good deal and shall presently say more, has at least two aspects. In part it is a purely interior matter; my desires for myself are conflicting, and I achieve a sense of personal integrity and independence by learning to choose courageously and sincerely in personal matters. In part it is the struggle between the desires of the unit and the needs of the community.

Man is fundamentally a social being, and though he passes through a stage of exclusive preoccupation with personal requirements, where contribution to the needs of the tribe is wholly compulsory, he must in the pursuit of happiness pass beyond that stage. There is a genuine satisfaction to be discovered when the civilized man learns consciously and voluntarily to say 'we' instead of 'I', to live in the interests of the group and not wholly for himself. At the present time the demands made by circumstances upon the individual, upon social groups and upon the nations of the world, are all pressing human

beings to a recognition of the relationships of larger organic units.

The sacrifice involved in such adjustments, and in the sublimation of the personal and smaller desires to the needs of the larger group, puts at the disposal of the individual energy of a very special nature. It is not too much to say that if the human race had been able to continue to find throughout the ages a sufficient outlet for its instincts without the need of voluntary social adaptation, then art, science, and the beauty of holiness would still be beyond our ken.

## CHAPTER IV

### FEAR IN CHILDHOOD

AS was said in the last chapter, the outgoing libido or instinctive energy of the human being may be blocked in infancy, one of the commonest causes of obstruction being fear. Some consideration is required in order to realize what a tremendous part this emotion plays in our lives. Ask a person casually and he will probably say that he has 'known fear' 'a few times' or 'once or twice' during his life. Of course he means terror. Kipling has a story called *How Fear came to the Jungle*, a tale of a great water-famine, when death was on all sides. But this again was terror rather than fear. Fear does not 'come' to the jungle. It is always there, just as it is always in the nursery, in the school-room, in the office, and on the golf-links. Every day of our lives we are afraid of a hundred trivial things—of sitting in a draught, of being caught in the rain, of failing to digest our food, of working too hard, of offending or being offended by our neighbour, of losing our job, and above all of making fools of ourselves. We teach our children to be afraid of wetting their feet, of making a noise, of climbing trees, of sliding down the banisters, of speaking to strange dogs, of public opinion.

To inspire fear of consequences is the easiest and quickest way of enforcing one's will. In savage tribes the medicine-men, who have a store of inherited wisdom passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth, know that certain practices, such as intermarriage of near relatives, produce ill effects on the tribe. The fear of injuring future generations is too vague to deter the childish mind of the savage, so *tabus* or threats of the immediate vengeance of the gods are invented to ensure the keeping of sanitary and hygienic laws of nature. Similarly in dealing with children nature's retribution is often too remote to be an effective deterrent. Irrelevant and inappropriate punishments are accordingly invented. We do not *say* that these are intended to inspire fear, but clearly they have no other object.

Now there can be no doubt that while a knowledge of inevitable consequences is a valuable aid to discipline, yet fear of consequences is the most disastrously inhibiting thing in life. There is no other check on human enterprise so great as dread of hardship, of failure, and above all of ridicule. It is a curious fact, well known to most of us but seldom put into words, that fear is just as strongly magnetic as love. To dread a thing is to keep one's eye upon it, and where the eye of the soul is fixed, thither the whole personality is irresistibly drawn.

The magnetic power of fear is often experienced when we make some social blunder, such as upsetting a tea-cup, referring to a subject we know had better not be touched upon, &c. It is a matter of general experience that the more specifically one dreads committing such a blunder, the more likely one is to do so. Many people ascribe this fact to the 'cussedness of things', but there is a perfectly reasonable sequence of cause and effect. We tend to do what our mind is fixed upon, *whether the fixation is one of attraction or of repulsion*. This tendency has been shown of late years to affect not only the functions over which we exercise voluntary control, such as speech and movement, but also the non-voluntary processes of the body. Thus to concentrate the mind on the digestion with a conviction that it will not function properly produces indigestion, and to dwell on the fear that one is being infected by the person with a streaming cold who is sitting next one in a railway carriage is an excellent way to catch the cold. These facts are recognized by most people nowadays, yet few make the useful generalization that to fear a thing is the worst way of avoiding it.

Fear is one of the chief causes both of conscious and unconscious conflict. Constantly the life-urge is saying to us 'do', and the fear instinct is saying to us 'don't', and, as already shown,

these conflicts sap our vitality and cause petty ill health. It is therefore well worth while to familiarize ourselves with the common fears of children and adults and to know how they are manifested.

Subjects in whom any considerable damming back of libido by fear has taken place conform to a fairly well-marked and easily recognizable type. They are characterized by a somewhat low vitality, not necessarily ill health but rather lack of zest. They shrink from responsibility and desire 'peace at any price'. They will endure any discomfort, misery, deprivation, or injustice rather than struggle against people or circumstances.

In the Victorian age this state of things was so common among women of the upper classes as to be the rule rather than the exception. It was considered that a young lady should be timid, retiring, languid, and more or less indisposed. Such women were sought after as wives, and where these qualities were not natural they were frequently assumed by way of an attractive pose. Where a species of psychological repression is as common as this, what may be called a conventional sublimation is worked out. Hence a strenuous round of parochial good works and religious duties, together with continuous and self-effacing service to parents and brothers, not only prevented dangerous introversion but



in many cases produced a high type of what one might describe as negative sainthood. In too many cases, however, the sublimation failed, and chronic depression, invalidism, and eccentricity supervened.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that the woman of outstanding greatness, who in those days had the strength and originality to break away from the tradition of fear and repression, fell into the error of over-compensation, and developed the opposite characteristics in an exaggerated degree. Florence Nightingale and Dorothea Beale in their later years became benevolent autocrats, and the early exponents of 'Women's Rights' did harm to their cause by an affected independence in matters of dress and behaviour.

It may be helpful to describe in some detail certain ways in which fear and anxiety affect behaviour and health, since a knowledge of this curious mechanism of conscious and unconscious life is important for teachers and parents, and supplies a useful key to unlock the secrets of otherwise incomprehensible behaviour on the part of children. Take for example Ellen, a child of four, who has just begun to face the fact that Peter, now aged nearly two and beginning to run about, is 'in the way', interfering with her games and toys, and absorbing Mother's and Nurse's

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The Rector's Daughter*, by F. M. Mayor.

attention. While Peter was in the pram it was easier; he was just baby-brother and every one said she 'ought to be proud to have such a nice baby-brother to play with'. So Ellen tried to be proud and looked after him in such a way as to win approval, which she values enormously. Here comes in her conflict between the real dislike of having baby-brother break her toys, and fear lest if she shows her true feelings she will no longer be considered 'Mother's good little girl'. Just to be told that the broken toy can be mended does not resolve the conflict, though it may ease a situation temporarily. If Ellen and Peter are really unsympathetic to each other and this conflict increases, a curious split can take place. Externally Ellen adopts the attitude that wins approval. She is 'nice' to Peter, even very anxious for his welfare and 'afraid he might get hurt' by dogs, accidents, &c. But she will one morning suddenly burst out in a fit of violent temper over her porridge, refuse to eat it, say it is 'nasty' and she hates it, and even throw some of it on the floor. Nurse and mother are astonished. Ellen always has liked her porridge, does not have temper fits over nothing, and so on. What has really happened is that all Ellen's feelings about Peter which she has been afraid to show in regard to him have, as it were, been split off from Peter and now attach themselves

to porridge, over which there is as yet no tabu. If a tabu is imposed and she is forced to submit to porridge or be disapproved of, the excited emotion or anxiety will attach itself to one thing after another. She becomes a difficult child, and remains so until Peter ceases to break her toys, or until her conflict of feeling is relieved by joining forces with him against a mutually detested nurse, or by some assurance that she is equally important with him in her parents' lives.

The suppressed feeling of anxiety may sometimes also produce special symptoms, as in the case described on p. 72 of the child and her bicycle

Unreasoning tempestuous fits of feeling, then, can often be traced to a deep-rooted anxiety on the part of the child, the anxiety state being one in which strong emotion is felt about a given situation, but deeply repressed because of fear of unpleasant consequences. When the fear of consequences and the instinctive uprush of feeling, hatred, resentment, or jealousy—as in Ellen's case—are about equally weighted, an unstable nervous and mental condition results, in which it is possible for the feelings to detach themselves from their original object and be projected upon or attached to some apparently quite unrelated object. There is, of course, always some underlying link between the real

cause of emotion and that on which it is projected. Probably Peter, for some reason or other, was not expected to eat porridge, and the porridge was therefore unconsciously symbolical to Ellen of the causes of her jealousy. But the onlooker has no idea of this sort of underground connexion, and is baffled by unexpected outbursts of feeling over things that are essentially unimportant even to the child itself.

The everyday fears which beset us in modern civilized life are fairly easy to classify, for while there is infinite variety of detail their main sources are few. Although, in point of fact, adult and childish fears have the same fundamental sources, for the sake of simplicity it will be better to discuss childish and adult fears under separate headings.

### CHILDREN'S FEARS

In speaking of children we have in mind those who live under normal conditions of childhood, in a home and under the care of parents or other responsible adults. The waif of the slums, who has to fend for himself and bear the responsibility of his own existence, has the fears and anxieties proper to a grown-up person. But the fears of the ordinary child may for the most part be classified under a few main heads—fear of the unknown, fear of physical danger and pain, fear

of ridicule and disapproval, and the fear of growing up. Akin to these, and often more far-reaching in its effects than any of them, is the vague generalized sense of insecurity, which acts as a kind of fungus or blight on the lives of many children.

*Fear of the Unknown.*

Fear of the unknown is probably a racial instinct inherited from savage ancestors for whom anything unfamiliar was likely to be a menace to life. With civilized human beings this type of dread tends to diminish as reasoning power develops. In its first three or four years of life a baby is apt to be afraid of anything unfamiliar. Thus in the infant schools of our big towns some children from homes so poor as to contain nothing whatsoever save bare necessities, when introduced to a room full of toys and other childish delights such as they have never seen, are terrified, and will cry for hours on end with dread of the unfamiliar rocking-horse or teddy-bear. Even an unaccustomed face may frighten babies of this age. The same type of dread of the unknown persists in grown-up people, but is of course relatively seldom experienced, because, while we constantly meet with unfamiliar combinations of things, we seldom encounter what is wholly outside our experience.

When we do, we say it is uncanny, and we feel fear. But the word *uncanny* means unknown. If for example we were to find sitting on our hearth-rug a small animal with a kitten's body and a chicken's head, most of us would experience a momentary thrill of fear, not because the animal looked at all dangerous, but merely because it was outside our experience. We might justify our emotion by calling the monstrosity uncanny. But to the child many things are mysterious and monstrous which to us are commonplace. He cries in the dark because of something he imagines to be lurking there, and it is as cruel to shut him up with an imaginary monster as it would be to shut a man up in a dark room with a real cobra.

One of the unforgettable horrors of my own babyhood was a monster called a squidgeon. It lived on a book-shelf in a very dark little room in my grandmother's house, and was used laughingly by my elders as a means of 'getting a rise out of' me. In a sense I knew that it was made of a large orange and some burnt matches, but I had not seen it made, and I was never allowed to go up close and examine it. Hence I always felt that it *might* be alive, just as children feel that the white object in the dark corner which they know in the day-time is the curtain, *might* be a ghost. One day my grown-up tormentors

got tired of the squidgeon joke—or possibly the orange went bad! In any case the monster suddenly disappeared, and because I was never able to look that creature full in the eye and satisfy myself that he was a hoax, he haunted me for many a long day.

*Fear of Physical Danger.*

Fear of physical danger is a common source of unconscious conflict in children. A high-spirited child feels it derogatory to himself-respect to admit even to himself that he is afraid to jump off a diving-board into deep water or to face a formidable-looking dog. Gladys, a rather reserved little girl of ten years old, was given a bicycle on her birthday. She could not ride, but was all agog to try, and at her first attempt ran into the hedge, tumbled off upon the road, and gave herself a hard knock. It was, she explained, 'nearly tea-time', so she put the bicycle aside for that day. Next morning she was in bed with a temperature. It was a real one, duly registered by the clinical thermometer, and it persisted for several days without any apparent cause. The fear which she felt and would not consciously admit even to herself was in conflict with her self-esteem and her desire to learn to bicycle. But for the temperature her big brother must needs have guessed the real reason for her abandonment of

the new toy. Gladys's father was a doctor who knew something about temperatures and repressed fears. He elicited, apparently by an accidental turn of the conversation, that learning to bicycle was nervous work, and tactfully agreed that many grown-up people also found it so. Very shortly after this conversation the temperature went down and Gladys was herself again, ready to face her fear and overcome it.

Self-induced illness of this kind is very common in children, probably as much so as conscious malingering. But even a case of palpably sham sickness requires careful handling. It is best never to accuse a child point blank of pretence, for in so doing one may set up a resistance which will produce real symptoms. If one tells him that one is sorry he feels ill, but that he must put a brave face on it and do his work as well as he can, one avoids rousing in him the impulse, conscious or unconscious, to prove that he really *was* ill in spite of the cruel suspicion of his elders.

### *Fear of Ridicule.*

Fear of ridicule is perhaps in many children's lives the greatest of all the inhibiting forces. Ridicule produces a sense of inferiority which persists long after the incident which gives rise to it has faded from the memory.



To burst out laughing at a child who mispronounces a word or makes a social error often harms it far more than a severe thrashing would do. To storm at a child or to strike it may injure its nervous system, but to ridicule it may injure its self-respect, and thus destroy that quality so needed in after-life, self-confidence.

In a recent novel<sup>1</sup> the story is told of a man whose courage failed him repeatedly at a pinch, so that any undue strain produced nervous collapse. As a baby he had had a highly strung and fastidious mother whom he adored and imitated, and a robust father who attempted to cure him of what he considered girlish sensitiveness and primness by laughing at the child before servants. He grew up hypersensitive and self-conscious. The strain of the War with the responsibility of military leadership proved too much for him, because his self-respect and self-confidence had been irretrievably damaged in childhood. He had repressed his sense of inferiority, and outwardly took a leader's part as one born to it, but the unconscious conflict between *desire* to exercise his natural powers and *fear* of making mistakes and being put to shame weakened his capacity for endurance, so that when the strain came it snapped.

<sup>1</sup> *The Soul Sisters*, by A. J. Anderson. See also *The Coward*, by R. H. Benson.

Fear of ridicule will make some children tell lies more readily than fear of punishment. They seem to have an unconscious realization that punishment is evanescent, but injury to self-respect lasting. Kenneth was a plucky and truthful little boy of six. He had just learnt to tell the time and was very proud of the accomplishment. Spending the morning with a grown-up neighbour for whom he had a great admiration, he felt that dinner-time was drawing near, and kept looking very knowingly and proudly at the clock on the mantelpiece. After a time his friend said laughingly, 'Kenneth, you aren't looking at that clock, are you? It has stopped.' Kenneth, feeling it to be disgraceful that a boy of six should not know when the clock had stopped, and imagining that all his ostentatious parading of his new accomplishment had made him not grand but ridiculous, lied hastily in an agony of mortification 'I wasn't looking at the clock, I was looking at the flowers'

One of the commonest defects in children from middle- and upper-class homes is that of self-consciousness. A teacher of dancing of very wide experience once said to me, 'One can gauge with considerable accuracy a child's social class simply by the way it dances. Children from the slums are delightful to teach, and dance with complete naturalness and *abandon*. As you go

up the social scale they become less and less spontaneous, and a dancing class of the children of "county families" may be the dullest and heaviest thing on earth.' The same is true of all forms of artistic self-expression. Spontaneity characterizes the masses, self-consciousness the upper classes. It is true that well-bred children do not manifest their self-consciousness by squirming, finger-sucking, and pouting. With them it takes the form of rigidly conventional behaviour, and a dullness and stolidity which are significant of repression. The reason is obvious. In the social stratum where an angry word and a clout on the head are the usual form of reproof and are little accounted of, no real damage is done to the child, because his self-respect is not hurt. He merely 'makes himself scarce' for awhile, and returns unabashed when his parent's irritation has subsided. But in families where nurse and governess are never out of sight, and where unfortunate little Miss Betty and Master John are constantly accused in a gently shocked tone of being vulgar, ill bred, pert, rough, or 'not quite nice', it is inevitable that self-criticism and self-consciousness should become habitual, and should tend, by undermining the child's confidence in itself, to check the natural impulse toward self-expression.

Since children must be taught to conform to

social codes and not to make themselves a nuisance, this problem of self-consciousness presents difficulties. Much might be done if people would try to show them beforehand what is the correct thing, instead of teasing and criticizing them after they have made mistakes. We say, 'What a rude boy you are, James. Why don't you speak nicely when there are visitors in the drawing-room?' But we may almost take it for granted that James would behave prettily if he knew exactly what to do and say, and how to do and say it. Like ourselves, he is simply afraid of doing the wrong thing, and so he gets behind a chair and glowers. It is useless to show him *in front of visitors* how he ought to act. We should not like to be thus humiliated ourselves. Show him carefully beforehand, using positive and not negative terms, so that when the occasion arises he will approach the drawing-room with a happy and confident feeling that he is master of the situation. Then he is likely to behave charmingly.

Again, children should be left to themselves just as much as possible. We should not expect them to endure a twelve-hour day while we feel that eight is all we can stand ourselves. A child's working day may be reckoned as the hours in which he is being made to conform to his elders' standards of behaviour. Let us make those

hours short and definite, and leave him to spontaneous expression as much as we possibly can. It is true that we feel much more comfortable if we know that nurse is always with the children to keep them from harm, but this is largely selfishness, and may prove the ruin of our children's chance of free and healthy development. We must just face the fact that children left to themselves may quarrel, may get a few hard knocks, and may do a certain amount of damage to their material surroundings. On the other hand they learn such invaluable lessons as that you cannot break your toys and have them, that if you are spiteful to Mary, Mary will inevitably be disagreeable to you, that life with one's equals involves plenty of give and take, and that selfishness really does not pay in the long run.

The fact that ridicule is a supremely effective tool with children makes it a very tempting one to use. If with a few well-directed and scathing taunts I can cure a child once and for all of the habit of annoying me in a certain direction, it seems on the face of it a great waste of time not to employ such means. Besides, surely it is *for the child's good* to be cured summarily of this or that annoying or anti-social trick? That is how we always salve our conscience when we are cruel to children. But to cure a child of a trick by ridicule is like curing measles by a cold bath.

You may get rid of the symptom, for such tricks are always symptomatic of some unsatisfactory state of mind. But you leave the disease untouched or aggravated, to come out presently in a worse form. Every one knows the kind of child who develops a new exasperating habit as fast as the old one is cured, and if no obvious symptoms supervene, you have perhaps done irreparable damage by driving the mischief inward. The fact that you cannot any longer see and be warned by the symptom makes the danger much greater. The occasions on which one is justified in ridiculing a child are so rare that it is safest never to do so. It is too dangerous an experiment.

There is a certain type of child in whom love of approbation makes the fear of sin a strong psychic factor. At a very early age children have the capacity to distinguish between naughtiness and sin. Thus making a noise which wakes the baby, breaking mother's china, climbing a forbidden tree, being rude to the servants, are naughty; but telling lies, stealing, and cheating are sins. Naughtiness differs from sin in that it is punished and done with. Sin leaves a more lasting stain, and it is this mysterious stigma that engenders fear and a sense of inferiority. The consciousness of having told a lie and the conflict between fear of consequences and desire for confession may be the

cause of prolonged nervous strain and inability to cope with daily life. In training a child it is a delicate and very important task to eliminate the fear which leads to morbid remorse and repression, and yet not to blunt the fine moral sense which makes many a child feel that to steal a piece of chocolate is essentially the same as to steal a purse. His instinct is right, and you can do just as much harm by saying to the chocolate-stealer, 'Never mind, dear, it was only a trifle', as you can on the other hand by saying, 'You are a thief, and God will not love you any more.' To find that a grown-up person laughs at what the child has brooded over as a moral enormity shakes the child's sense of values, without in the least helping it to gain an idea of proportion.

### *Fear of Growing Up.*

Besides these three main sources of child fear, another very common one not often recognized is the fear of growing up. This dread of the next step pursues us all from infancy till death. The baby unconsciously evades and shrinks from the step toward childhood, the child dreads the beginning of adult life, the youth dreads middle age, and the middle-aged man or woman dreads old age, while old age and all ages dread the step onward which we call death. Why is this? That

we should fear death even though unassociated with illness and pain is comprehensible enough, for it is the gate into an as yet undiscovered country of whose joys and difficulties we have had no personal experience. But the baby who unconsciously resists leaving babyhood behind, and the child who clings to childhood, are in very much the same position. They realize by instinct and from observation that life will exact from them renunciation of the joys and privileges of their present stage, which they know in the only way in which we can ever really *know* anything, viz by experience. But they cannot in this sense have any knowledge of the joys and privileges of the next stage. The baby realizes dimly that it must forgo much of the care, indulgence, and petting that it now enjoys, but it has no perception which enables it to anticipate the pleasures of enlarged mental and physical opportunities. Hence one frequently sees a child of perhaps ten or eleven years striving desperately by the use of infantile tricks and beguilements and an assumption of engaging helplessness to persuade its elders, who are usually only too ready to be persuaded, that it is still a baby needing fond indulgence and protection. This is simply a manifestation of the fear of growing up <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chap II, *Regression*.



Similarly, the adolescent sees looming before him the responsibilities and sacrifices which he half realizes are bound to come with maturity and marriage, and has naturally no conception of the pleasures that help to compensate for these cares. In proportion as his childhood has been happy and healthy and full of outlets for his growing powers, so will he be liable to the danger of refusing to leave it behind. There is no use telling a girl of ten or eleven, who is faced with the very real terror that some day soon she will have to stop playing with dolls, that presently she will no longer want to play with dolls. She cannot believe you, because her experience has been all in the opposite direction. We have to face the fact that the present-day custom of making a child's life as ideally happy and free and interesting as possible brings with it the danger of his refusing the next step. As therefore we have made sacrifices to provide the happiness of his childhood, so we must very definitely sacrifice our pleasure in having him dependent on us, and of set purpose teach him to face adult life with confidence and courage.

On the other hand, a too early familiarity with the troubles of his elders may provide an equally potent source of fear in the mind of the young. A child whose home is in any way unhappy is likely to feel this fear acutely, without under-

standing in the least the cause of his own depression and irritability. Barbara, a girl of unusually fine character, good mental capacity, and warmly affectionate nature, became at about sixteen moody, depressed, irritable, and irresponsible, and at the same time intensely reserved. She developed an unhealthy interest in the ethics of suicide, and had a phantasy that her own life would end when she left school. As her health was excellent and her vitality abundant, it was obvious to her good sense that this ending would not come from natural causes—hence the interest in suicide. Leaving school at eighteen she went through a period of neurotic misery which was not much alleviated by the excitement of 'coming out'. She did not take much interest in her new experiences, having a fixed idea that for her all joy in life had ended with her school-days. It was a clear instance of a fear-obsession, and in such cases one looks to home circumstances for an explanation. Further inquiry elicited that Barbara is one of the younger members of her family, and has been idolized by her mother, to whom she is devotedly attached and with whom she identifies herself, i.e. she unconsciously takes upon herself the experiences of the mother. Marriage and family life have brought upon this woman an unusual amount of grief, care, and anxiety, which -

Barbara feels acutely. It is obvious that she regards marriage as an inevitable part of the adult woman's life, and has the fixed idea, 'How much better in health and in every way my mother would have been if she had not married.' She is able to see the inevitable drawbacks of family life, but obviously she has no means at all of realizing the compensatory joys of wifehood and motherhood. Therefore from her point of view the adored mother's life has been ruined by marriage. One inquires when this marriage took place, and learns that it was the year after Barbara's mother left school. The unconscious fear becomes evident. 'Mother's happiness ended with her school life I wish to die before I have to face the next phase.' This identification of the self with the mother is not at all uncommon in adolescence, and is often responsible for an unnatural shrinking from marriage, which if not overcome may alter the whole course of life.

It is one of the hopeful things about modern education that, on the whole, children of to-day have fewer causes for fear and inhibition as compared with the children of three or four generations ago. But it is noteworthy that this fear of growing up is to some extent a new development, and one greatly to be deplored. It is true that the dread of passing on to the next stage is

inherent in all of us, and there have always been some children who clung secretly to childhood and shrank from the idea of maturity. Nevertheless our parents and grandparents as a rule did not suffer as much as we do from that fear. Children of their generations realized from the start that life was a hard school and that its lessons were compulsory. They were uncomfortably clothed, and had little freedom and few amusements except what they made for themselves. When they begged for liberty, indulgence, and information, the parents said, 'Wait till you are older', and they learnt to anticipate with joy the privileges thus deferred. Consequently while there was much unhealthy repression there were fewer Peter Pans in those days. Children wanted to be grown up because they envied the joys pictured as belonging to that state. In this respect their attitude was much healthier than that of the present-day child, whose fear of the future often tends to produce what is known as a *fixation* in the attitude of childish irresponsibility.

Those who are concerned over the irresponsible attitude of the young people of to-day would understand them better if it were realized that they are the direct result of a transitional period in education. The more advanced parents and teachers have been for some time chiefly

concerned in securing freedom from fear, freedom for self-expression in the educational system. It is becoming pretty evident that freedom by itself is not enough. As has been said, obstacles in the life-stream, if met and dealt with adequately, give more intense self-realization than if they are either removed or wholly swept aside. The actual energy generated by the damming up of life-force in the young which occurs when they leave school and no longer have the old school outlets or responsibilities, can be usefully directed without destroying the sense of freedom developed in modern schools. But the circumstances of family life are often unsympathetic, the parents sometimes being of the older conventional pattern, and sometimes seeking for some sort of post-war freedom themselves in a way that conflicts with the ideas of their children. In either case the young man or woman has to make a huge effort of adjustment in order to step out of the framework of school into the unframed, unorganized experiences of society, or the much more severe discipline of business routine.

Given time and sympathetic understanding, most of the modern young people do adjust, and will probably make a far more original contribution to their world than their elders. But first they must really grow up. The test of the modern

child, eager for or fearful of adult responsibilities, and of the newer education of which he is the direct product, comes only when he has definitely emerged from what might be called psychic adolescence. In the post-war generation this emergence is often very late, not taking place until the late twenties or early thirties.

*The Sense of Insecurity.*

As every one who has had to do with babies knows, the sensation of being firmly and securely held gives the infant deep pleasure, so much so that to some nervous children the muscular strength of the father is more soothing than the familiar warmth of the mother's arms.

Not only during infancy but at all ages security is a fundamental need in child life, and a lack of it is one of the very common causes of retardation, nervousness, and indifferent health. It is in the home environment that the need is greatest, and unfortunately it is here that the lack is most common, since parents do not always understand the kind of thing that makes a child feel insecure and uneasy. A very usual and yet serious cause is lack of harmony between parents, whether this consists in daily bickering, or in occasional outbursts of violent quarrelling, or in politely concealed mutual irritation which it is fondly supposed the children will not notice. As Henry

James in some of his great novels<sup>1</sup> so skilfully shows, children are almost always aware of the psychic atmosphere of home, no matter how it may be glossed over and concealed. The greater the concealment, the more acute is the child's sense of uncertainty and nervous trepidation. If the situation cannot be altered, then it is far better that the child should be taken into confidence and given as clear an understanding of it as circumstances permit. As long as he is nervously wondering 'what is going to happen next' he is at a great disadvantage as regards normal development. If a child is temperamentally nervous and unsure of himself he can be greatly helped by a home environment where certainty and security in little ways are deliberately 'catered for', where appointments and promises are surely kept, and where there is an ordered daily routine for him to follow.

Readers who are specially interested in this problem will find it fully discussed with examples from real life in an able book by Wickes, *The Inner World of Childhood*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *What Maime Knew*, by Henry James

<sup>2</sup> See Bibliography.

## CHAPTER V

### ADULT FEARS

THE fears of grown-up people are not essentially different from those of children, but they are more varied and complex because of the adult's greater knowledge and experience. They are also usually more difficult to dislodge, partly because deep-rooted and of long standing, and partly because more skilfully concealed. A child will show you its fear, and will to a great extent trust you when you dismiss it as a mere bogey. The adult is usually convinced that he knows better than any one else how real the source of his anxiety is.

Fear of disease is one of the commonest causes of adult neurosis. The ordinary man without medical training is often curiously ignorant, and as it were superstitious, about heredity and infection in connexion with disease. Foolish newspaper articles and half-understood fragments of conversation heard in youth prey upon the minds of people who would shrink from admitting their anxiety even to a physician. The idea that tuberculosis, epilepsy, insanity, cancer, 'run in families' is regarded by many people outside the medical profession as incontrovertible fact. A man will for years have



person who lives in continual dread that everything he eats will give him indigestion, and the still commoner type of person who believes that every breath of cold air and every touch of rain or damp gives him cold. This disease-complex is so universal, and is probably so predominating a cause in most of our minor and many of our major ailments, that the tremendous success and immediate spread throughout the civilized world of Christian Science and 'Couéism' are not to be wondered at. Both these cults succeed in banishing fear and replacing it by confidence, and as a result many diseases melt away like snow before them.

Among the numerous cases of faith-healing of which the world to-day is so full, one meets with many in which, apparently, the patient has had no faith at all in the likelihood of cure. One is often assured in regard to such a person that he went most unwillingly to the healer, *protesting vehemently* that he had no belief at all in such nonsense, and was being forced into it by his friends, and yet *he was completely cured*. I have often been struck by the conjunction of these two (italicized) phrases, which occur together too frequently for mere coincidence. It was not a modern psychologist who wrote, 'Methinks the lady doth protest too much', yet the psychiatrist bases a great deal of his diagnosis on the now

familiar fact embodied in that line. One would like to know how many of the vehement unbelievers referred to (a) had unconscious reasons for not wanting to be healed, conflicting with a subconscious feeling that they might be, (b) had such an ardent desire for healing that they were in deadly fear of the shock of disappointment which might follow if they once admitted hope, (c) were afraid of being laughed at as 'superstitious' or 'pious'. A *violent* protest in the conscious mind is an almost infallible indication of a contrary conviction in the unconscious. It was Coué's leading contention that it is the unconscious mind which needs to be convinced. I think it possible that on the whole it is the people who go to Lourdes or to a healer either (a) with an 'open mind', or (b) with fervent and expressed faith, who come away empty; for the 'open mind' and the vehement piety are doubtless often screens to hide a lurking incredulity in the unconscious. But this suggestion obviously requires the support of statistics not yet available.

The fear of the next step in life, be it middle age, old age, or death, is essentially the fear of loss of pleasure. This is another very prevalent cause of neurosis, but has been sufficiently dealt with already. (See pp. 80, 81.)

Fear of work is another very common adult

phobia, usually quite unconscious. We are brought up from childhood to draw a hard line between work and play. Work, we are taught, is dull, boring, a tiresome necessity, very fatiguing, a great strain on the nerves, and likely to lead to a nervous break-down unless we are careful 'not to overdo it'. Play, which is the thing we do without compulsion, is exhilarating, refreshing, interesting, and healthful, and one can seldom have too much of it. But young children do their best to teach us that there is no real distinction between work and play. Buying and selling, sweeping and dusting, washing and ironing, carpentering and white-washing are prime amusements to the young,<sup>1</sup> and so is book-learning until the sophisticated elder brother substitutes the conventional standpoint. How sorry we should all be for a poor man compelled to walk for hours in all weathers over a bleak common, driving a small ball into an absurdly inadequate hole, and fishing it out again. What soul-killing monotony, and how rheumatic! How much worse off he is than the postman, who puts letters into quite convenient holes, does not have to fish them out again, and enjoys the friendly welcome of every one he meets. Yet the conventional fear of over-work, *i.e. dread of being bored for too many hours per*

<sup>1</sup> Cf the methods of Madame Montessori.

*week*, is a common enough source of conflict and neurosis.

So far we have dealt with fear-complexes in which there is a large physical element, in that they are connected with misfortunes that may happen to the body. But there are certain interesting causes of fear, much less easily recognized than the above, which are predominantly mental or emotional, and are related to the fundamental shrinking from the unknown of which we have already spoken.

The great majority of human beings seem to have both a longing for and a keen dread of novelty. The desire for new experience is a natural manifestation of vital energy. The libido spurs us on to activity, mental, emotional, and physical, and if this desire for something new finds no healthy outlet it achieves a morbid one. But the outgoing impulse is held in check by the dread of what may come. We have spoken of the action of this type of fear as it affects the passing of man from one stage of life to the next, and above all from life to death. The classic expression of this conflict is found in *Hamlet*, where the hero's longing to escape by self-destruction from the tragic dilemma in which he finds himself is balanced by imaginative fear of 'what dreams may come'. Setting aside these larger and worthier conflicts associated

with the greater issues of life, let us consider for a moment the petty and unnecessary dread of new ideas, new truths, and new customs by which so many people are tormented.

Every one recognizes that this manifestation of fear is pre-eminently an attribute of middle and old age. And yet age has had far wider experience of life's possibilities than youth, and might be expected to dread the unknown less, as indeed is the case with a few enlightened mortals. What is it that makes the majority accumulate prejudices and causes of panic instead of getting rid of them as life goes on? The answer, as I see it, is this.

Every man, as he passes through life and is beset by its daily puzzles and miseries, feels impelled to make for himself some kind of protection against disagreeable realities. He generally does this by picking up little bits of ready-made philosophy here and there as he goes along, and sticking them on to his mind to protect it from harsh contacts, just as a caddis-worm sticks irrelevant fragments of rubbish on to his body as armour against his foes. We tend more especially to stick such pieces of philosophy over spots that life has made tender or susceptible. Thus, for example, in youth our feelings may be lacerated by the misery we see in the world around us, and we look about for something

to cover the hurt. We seize upon such dicta as 'the unemployed are usually the unemployable', or 'beggars make a very good living, otherwise they wouldn't beg', or 'he has brought it on himself', or 'suffering is the will of God', or 'charity begins at home'. Something after this fashion we arm ourselves against the pinches and discomforts of reality. Conventional religion offers many such ready-made protections, and many more are handed down from one generation to the next. The nation assimilates these last in the form of proverbs, and the clan in the form of family sayings—'Father always used to say' or 'I can remember my grandmother teaching me'. We all of us feel a kind of pride in these sayings, and a proverb or quotation is a source of untold comfort and security. 'Blood is thicker than water', 'it's never too late to mend', 'finding's keeping', 'sour grapes', 'it's a long lane that has no turning', 'it takes two to make a quarrel', and the common misquotation 'be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever'—none of these statements are strictly true, but all have a modicum of truth, and give us a sense of moral support when the eternal conflict between right and wrong is pressing us hard and we cannot endure to face the issue squarely. Conventional religion is far more dangerous in this respect than even proverbial

wisdom, for the higher an ideal the more harmful always is its travesty or debasement. The Hindu and Buddhist faiths teach as a supreme fundamental truth the doctrine that what a man sows of good or evil he must inevitably reap, and can by no method escape. If he appears to escape his reward in this incarnation or world-life, he will but the more surely be repaid in the next. The Hindu, who cares less than we do for worldly prosperity but abhors effort and struggle, resolves his inner conflict by acceptance of the idea that, since all that happens to man is the inevitable result of past doings which cannot be undone, there is no need to trouble. What must be must be. Hence the indolence and lack of enterprise and executive ability for which the West is perpetually, and to some extent justly, blaming the East. The truth which the Hindu masses allow themselves to evade is that while the present cannot undo the past, it can mould the future.<sup>1</sup> If they faced this fact, the conflict in them between indolence and effort would become uncomfortably acute. The western Christian, to whom effort is less repugnant but worldly prosperity far more essential, and who rebels vehemently against suffering and loss,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Massfield's—

Fate, that is given to all men partly shaped,  
Is ours to alter daily till we die.

has invented different palliatives. He postulates (a) that while sin must be punished, the Saviour of Mankind bears the punishment, and not the sinner himself; (b) that the righteous man may expect to prosper, and has a right to demand of God that things shall go well with him if he propitiates Providence by doing his duty.

The low moral standard assumed in these beliefs, their childish crudity, their unreality in relation to daily life (where men have to bear the consequences of their own wrong-doing, and where the righteous are seldom the prosperous), their inconsistency with the teaching of the New Testament,<sup>1</sup> all these have little effect on our everyday, hand-to-mouth philosophy of self-protection. When we were young, father, mother, and teacher rewarded us more or less consistently for well-doing, protecting us from the more serious results of our mistakes and wrong-doing; and we continue the child's literal identification of Providence with its earthly protectors. Although day by day we see that

<sup>1</sup> 'Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap'—Gal. vi 7. 'Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.'—Matt x. 22. 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.'—Heb. xii. 6.

It is interesting to recall Bacon's saying: 'Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament; Adversity is the blessing of the New.' Most of us have hardly yet outgrown the older dispensation in our attitude towards life.



God's ways are other than the ways of men, the fact does not disturb our infantile outlook, and as this 'fixation' becomes established we dread more and more the intrusion of reality.

A man or woman who has thus shelled himself round with fragments of ready-made religion or philosophy has a deep unconscious fear of having his shell removed and of being left defenceless. Moreover, the ordinary emotions roused when a fear-complex is touched are resentment, anger, and a desire to hit out in some way. The gentlest and most humane of mortals can be stirred to acts of cruelty—if he is sufficiently frightened. For this reason a man whose so-called prejudices are touched will fly into a disproportionate rage; and similarly when a community has its cherished convictions assailed by a reformer, a man who has accustomed himself to look truth unflinchingly in the face, its normal reaction is wrath and resentment, expressed by ostracizing the truth-teller, or perhaps by finding some legal method of murdering him. The Jews were terrified, not that Christ would lead an insurrection, but that he would destroy their peace of mind and interfere with their false adaptation to reality. And for such reasons the great reformers throughout the ages have been persecuted. Similarly in everyday life a person may suffer a nerve-racking torment of fear lest a truth

which he feels is waiting just round the corner should jump on him, upset his accustomed adaptation to life, and put him to the painful and arduous necessity of making a new one. We are too ready to condemn such people as religious bigots or weak-minded conventionalists, because we do not realize the paralysing effect of fear as a factor in stifling thought. But let it be reiterated that while conscious fear plays a relatively small part in the everyday life of civilized people, it is our *unconscious* fears that pursue us incessantly until we bring them into consciousness and face them.

Another large class of people are living in perpetual fear, not of new ideas but of emotional experience. The fundamental reason for this very common state of mind is not easy to discover, but the immediate causes are not far to seek. It is the tradition of the Anglo-Saxon race that display of emotion is effeminate and undignified, and hence the average Englishman accustoms himself to conceal feeling. But any force that exists and is habitually bottled up is liable to destructive explosion, and explosions of emotion are painful, humiliating, and unbalancing to the average person. Let us return for a moment to the consideration of the young. Children and adolescents learn by experience to dread the results of emotional displays, which

give rise to ridicule and embarrassment, until gradually a fear of emotion and of all that relates to it grows up in the unconscious. In children, and to some extent in adults, this fear and deliberate suppression shows itself by such outward signs as nervous twitchings, incessant fidgeting, sulkiness, awkward and embarrassed behaviour, furtive attempts to attract notice, and so forth. Much of the difficulty that is experienced in dealing with adolescent girls and boys arises from their vehement but rigidly concealed fear of emotion. At that stage the whole emotional nature is stirred up by the onset of puberty, and to the ordinary and conventional fear of making a fool of oneself by a display of feeling is added the previously mentioned fear of the unknown; for it has to be remembered that every adolescent is struggling with a multitude of indefinable and disturbing physical and mental sensations, which are new, unaccountable, and hence fear-inspiring.

Every statement made by a boy or girl at the 'difficult age' is likely to be a concealed question or challenge to the older person. 'I hate my sister, I detest my home, I don't believe in God, duty is all rot, religion is a back-number'—these trite little bombshells are expressions of fear and desire for knowledge. The youth is asking your opinion of his revolutionary statements. He

wants to know if the turbulent thoughts and impulses which seethe in his mind are really as sinful as he used to think them when he was a child. The grown-up child who writes brilliantly obscene and grubby novels is asking public opinion the same sort of question. He is saying defiantly, 'These are my thoughts; are you really shocked or only pretending to be?' The truly 'grown-up' person, who has faced his fears and attained his balance, has a great responsibility towards these frightened questioners. To express horror and indignation, to 'shut up' the inquirer, to ban or censor the novel, was the old-fashioned response. Its result was to increase very greatly the culprit's unconscious fears, and to drive him to revolt, to defiance, and hence to wilder outbursts of licence. The modern response is a pretended attitude of sympathetic amusement, tolerance, and camaraderie. The old way was stupid but truthful, and the young felt and respected its sincerity, even while they hated and revolted from it. The modern response makes things easier and pleasanter at the moment, but youth knows in its heart that maturity is lying, or at best posing; and moreover these young people who ask questions are really pathetically anxious for a genuine answer, and are not satisfied with sugar-coated husks. They have a right to expect of us a sober and

truthful attitude in regard to their problems. We too have passed by that way, and our experience, if honestly progressive, should be helpful; the trouble is that we, too often, are still the victims of our own fears, and so cannot assuage theirs.

Examples and instances of the complicated part played by fear in our civilized community might be multiplied indefinitely. But enough has perhaps been said to show how completely it permeates the everyday life of a large proportion of people. One may ask then, What is the practical use of studying the psychology of fear? Can we ordinary people supply any remedy?

There would seem to be at least two ways in which very much can be done.

First, we can train ourselves to recognize the characteristic reactions indicating the presence of fear in children as described in the earlier part of the chapter, and to deal with them sympathetically, bearing in mind that such trifles as a chance remark overheard, a phrase in the Bible misunderstood, a hasty rebuke forgotten in a moment by its author, something seen by chance in the street, may start a fear-complex which will last for years or for a lifetime. To punish a child who lies from fear may be merely to frighten him further,<sup>1</sup> while the

<sup>1</sup> See Kipling's story, *Baa, Baa, Black Sheep*.

patient unravelment of his fear may cure him in a moment.

Secondly, to cultivate the habit of recognizing and making allowance for the factor of fear in dealing with subordinates or colleagues may help one to avoid many of the disputes, the sense of injustice, and the ill feeling that arise when people work together. The impertinent retort of your subordinate is very likely his response to your method of attack, which frightened him. Just as a timid animal will react to fear first by stealthy flight, and finally by turning desperately on its pursuer, so the timid and incapable or lazy human being will first evade discovery by every possible ruse, and then if cornered resort to ineffectual and meaningless abuse. We are all familiar with the courage of despair that comes to a person who is *consciously* terrified. We speak of a desperate man as having his back against the wall and so forth. But we fail to recognize the same symptoms of fear in the everyday frets and rubs of life.

Having once recognized the infinite ramifications of fear as a factor in the lives of others, we can do much to obviate it or prevent it, above all when we have to deal with children or young people. One of the worst mistakes of the careful mother or nurse is that of constantly suggesting petty fears to children. The healthy normal

child has as many lives as a cat, and it had far better fall down and hurt itself, or catch cold by getting wet, than be trained to encourage a thousand small dreads. Again, to frighten a child into 'respecting' you, or to 'frighten it out of' some fault, may be to sow the seeds of a life-long disability. Even-handed and immutable justice harms no child. Let it reap what it sows. But scathing rebuke, sudden pouncings of anger, and loud-voiced abuse are likely to ruin a sensitive child's chances of success in life, by forming centres or complexes of fear in the unconscious, which will act as inhibitions to progress later on. Most big undertakings require fearless confidence in order to achieve success, and the young man or woman who has laid up in childhood a store of unconscious fears and shrinkings is at a grave disadvantage in the struggle for existence.

But in order to free others from fear we must first throw off our own slavery. The person who refuses to face his inward fears is exactly in the position of the blackmailer's victim, for fear is the perpetual blackmailing of the conscious mind by the unconscious. The suffering involved in facing the tyrant once and for all is nothing to the life-long misery of remaining at his mercy. No man is really free until he can face every possibility in life. But in our reluctance to do this we prefer to pay and pay again.

Some people are afraid to face their own characters, and live in unconscious dread of having to admit that their highest motives are second-rate, and their lives selfish and self-seeking. It is usually the 'good' people in this world who suffer most from that terror. In point of fact, pure philanthropy is practically non-existent at our present stage of evolution.<sup>1</sup> We are kind, generous, unselfish, sympathetic, and public-spirited largely because it suits us, and satisfies our craving for self-approbation, to be so. Profoundly unaware as we are of the truth, it is nevertheless a fact that most of us ultimately spend our lives in doing either what we must do, driven by necessity, or what we want to do, driven by inclination. Our task is to train the self to want or desire the decent and generous course of action, but in so doing we have not achieved real unselfishness—merely a more lofty form of self-gratification. There will probably be a leaven of real self-denial in most of our better actions, and this leaven forms the basis for all optimistic philosophy. Man is capable of selflessness, and the saints have occasionally achieved it.<sup>2</sup> But we ordinary

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 163-4.

<sup>2</sup> For these things tend still upward, progress is  
The law of life, man's self is not yet Man. . . .  
But in completed Man begins anew  
A tendency to God. (Browning, *Paracelsus*.)



'good' and respectable people have scarcely begun to see it even from afar. So one fear that needs facing is the fear of hurting our self-approbation by dragging into consciousness the very mixed motives which inspire what we consider our best actions.

The saints have echoed the Christ in asserting that 'whosoever will save his life shall lose it'.<sup>1</sup> We are free from fear only when we have brought into consciousness and faced the possibility of seeing our most hidden fears realized. As long as we 'love' any aspect of life in such a way that we are in terror of losing it, we have in a sense already lost it. Do not let us, however, confuse the issue. We cannot abolish pain by facing it. All we can do is to abolish or eliminate the fear of pain by calmly accepting its possibilities. But that is much.

With many of us unconscious fears have gone so deep that we cannot bring them into consciousness. If we feel that to be the case, either with ourselves or with those for whom we are responsible, it is worth remembering that psychotherapy is a medical science whose practitioners are gaining greater skill and experience every day, and that much misery may be avoided by a judicious use of the help available from such a source.

<sup>1</sup> Mark viii. 35.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SENSE OF POWER IN CHILDHOOD

THE universality of unconscious fear as an influence in civilized life is, as before said, very little realized. Obviously if it were recognized it would not be unconscious, and it is with the unconscious element in life that we are now dealing.

The same thing is true of the love of power. There are conscious fears of which every one is aware, and there is conscious love of power which we all know about. We recognize that Napoleon and Alexander the Great loved power. We could even perhaps make a list of people of our acquaintance whom we consider petty tyrants, consumed with desire for power. But *we ourselves* are assumed to be free from this trait. We sometimes have positions of power and responsibility thrust upon us; and we flatter ourselves that we can dominate a situation if necessary, though if we were given our choice we should prefer a quiet life, making no demands upon our capacity for government and responsibility. It is the rarest thing to find an ordinary individual who will admit or recognize in himself the instinct for display of power.

There are, of course, obvious reasons for this

phenomenon. The whole trend of social convention is against the admission of a wish to dominate one's fellows. Children will openly squabble for the position of leader, and show frankly in countless ways their desire to be first, but community life very soon checks this open display. And deliberate suppression of unpopular wishes soon develops into unconscious repression, and concealment even from the self. The desire for self-approbation is so strong in us that it takes a good deal of deliberate courage to admit even to ourselves that we possess instincts which public opinion condemns. As life goes on these repressions sink down very deep into the unconscious, and it becomes increasingly difficult to bring them to the surface. Nevertheless, experience has shown the psychologist that the desire to dominate is one of the fundamental impulses in every normal human being.

Just as the will to live is counterbalanced in all of us by fear, so the will to dominate is everywhere counterbalanced by a sense of inferiority. It is necessary to strike a balance between our desire for mastery and our sense of limitation. The man who has no sense of limitation is a megalomaniac. The man who succumbs entirely to his sense of inferiority develops melancholia or depressive mania. And

between these extremes lie numberless gradations of more or less balanced humanity.

The desire for power when it becomes an overwhelming lust is a ghastly and hideous manifestation of perverted human libido. But all human achievement in the realms of commerce, science, art, and spiritual activity are in part the direct result of this desire. Without it we should still be savages.

Longfellow's rendering of the myth of Hiawatha shows most beautifully the primitive man's longing for power over his surroundings. To improve the position of his tribe and to free them from the fear that goes with blind dependence on the forces of nature Hiawatha struggles for dominance over these forces, and leads his people from the primitive state of merely collecting food, through the half-civilized stage of dependence on hunting and fishing, to the dawn of civilization, when he has conquered Mondamin, and can henceforth produce food from the earth at will.

The individual human being begins in infancy a struggle comparable to that of Hiawatha in his efforts to conquer and dominate his surroundings. First he strives for power over his own limbs. Then he struggles to bend his parents and his inanimate environment to his will. He finds that crying gives him power over

his mother and nurse, and experiments with this weapon till he discovers its utmost limitations. When crying fails he tries engaging blandishments. He cultivates a pathetic gesture and tone of voice. If he finds these methods successful he carries them on into later childhood and becomes a cry-baby, or develops a habit of putting his head on one side and whining. The number of only children who have to be cured at school of the wheedling and whining that were successful at two years old but are ineffective at eight is enormous. If all these methods fail as a means of overcoming circumstances the baby has many other strings to his bow. He turns his attention from the anti-social desire to make human slaves, and concentrates on the task of subduing inanimate objects. Madame Montessori, in her experiments with subnormal Italian babies, soon found what many a working-class mother has known from time immemorial, viz. that a child is happier in mastering real things than he is in playing with woolly toys and having all his difficulties solved for him; and that to give a baby the opportunity of exerting his strength and ingenuity is to free his pent-up libido, and to supply him with the best kind of kindergarten training.

The working-class mother's baby who staggers about with a full-sized brush and dust-pan and endeavours to sweep down the stairs is blissfully

happy, and might legitimately be envied by the poor little rich child who goes for a walk in the park with nurse. Drums, trumpets, mouth-organs—we try to pretend to ourselves that our children would just as soon have ‘a nice quiet toy’, but in our hearts we know better. The power to make a good loud noise, and to keep on making it, is the best outlet that many children have left to them when all sensible excuses for effort and mastery are removed. If your child is not even allowed to make an unpleasing clamour in order to satisfy his instinct, he may find a still less pleasant outlet, such as pulling the legs and wings off flies. A little later in life such toys as Meccano will partially satisfy him, but not nearly so well as a bit of soft wood and a few tools. In his dreams he is an engine-driver, or a ship’s captain, or the owner of an 8 h.p. motor-cycle; i.e. he is the absolute master of something big and powerful and useful to the community.

A great many parents and teachers in the present day are recognizing the truths which Madame Montessori put before the world about the training of babies. But too often the sense of self-dependence and mastery which a child gets through judicious infant-school or nursery treatment is lost when the next stage of education sets in.

The results of an education which gives too little scope to the child's will to power are so numerous and varied that it is difficult to enumerate them at all exhaustively. It is the most carefully-looked-after child who suffers most. The devoted mother, who desires ardently that her child shall grow up as nearly perfect as may be, is the worst offender, and girl children suffer more than boys. The little girl who is washed and dressed, and always taken out by the hand, who is amused all day long by her elders and whose every effort towards self-determination is checked, whose smallest action is watched and commented on, who is wrapped up when she goes out and unwrapped when she comes in, who is told how she may spend her pocket-money and what she may read, who must not get overheated or walk on the damp grass, whose thoughts are inquired into, whose very prayers are supervised—this poor little mortal when she is nine or ten years old has either lost all sense of initiative and become a colourless nonentity, or else astonishes her loving guardians by persistent bad behaviour. In the latter case she becomes an obstinate little rebel, and, says her poor mother, 'the more we do and sacrifice for her, the worse she gets'. This type of child often begins her school career by being obstinate, troublesome, and given to crying or sulking when communal

life rubs her the wrong way or interferes with her desires. But if the school is such as to afford opportunity for independence, self-expression, and freedom from irksome and minute thwartings and checks, she usually falls into line with other children, and derives such enjoyment from the freeing of her pent-up energy that school becomes to her an earthly paradise, from which home is a place of exile. This state of things naturally rouses jealous resentment in the devoted parent, who is profoundly hurt that the child should evince such ingratitude and want of natural affection.

During the years of adolescence this conflict between school and home often becomes painfully acute, for love of power and desire for independence is accentuated by the awakening of the sexual instincts, while at the same time the nervous irritability due to physical conditions often outruns control, and storms of temper, outbursts of insolence, and bouts of sullenness make the adolescent a distinctly uncomfortable house-mate. At this stage the child may find the ordered, even, unchangeable routine of school very restful, and the rubs and irregularities of the ordinary home correspondingly irritating. To moon about and do nothing in particular is for physical reasons a special temptation during adolescence, and yet there



is no time in life when this habit is more harmful and misery-producing to the spirit. The steady and varied occupation all day long which school-life provides is a refuge and support to the restless puzzled mind. Parents would do well to recognize these factors, and to be forbearing and patient with the considerable number of children who go through a phase of 'hating home'.

To return to the child passing out of babyhood; as he acquires a fuller knowledge of his own limitations, and a more advanced faculty of self-criticism, he inevitably develops, in reaction from his thwarted will to power, a set of inferiority complexes. The commonest causes among young children are physical. With girls the sense of inferiority to boys is, one might almost say, universal. Many psycho-therapists hold that this is due to actual jealousy of the male bodily attributes, but in point of fact the sense of inferiority exists quite commonly where the little girl has no knowledge of the physical differences between the sexes, and it seems more closely allied to the love of power than to the sex instinct. Very early in life the greater freedom and variety of opportunity offered to the boy is borne in upon the girl. This was more especially true in days when girls' clothing was a hindrance to deeds of physical prowess, such as tree-climbing, running, and riding.

Another common cause of inferiority complexes is physical size. To be much smaller or much bigger than the average playmate may be a constant source of mortification to a child. The small and delicate compensate themselves by phantasies of great deeds, and more often than not try to give reality to their dreams by boasting and 'showing off'. The overgrown child finds the task of compensation harder. He gets less petting and indulgence than the undersized one, and is constantly being repressed and snubbed for clumsiness or boisterous behaviour, or is having attention called to his rapid growth by well-meaning relatives. He knows he is ungainly, and when he attempts to show off his strength he is reproached as a bully or a coward. The danger of his energy being dammed at the source, and of his becoming the sulky type of introvert, is considerable. If he chances to be of low mental calibre and slow at games he will very likely develop into the hulking bully so well known in school stories. Or again, the suppressed energy which can find no natural outlet may force its way prematurely along the sexual channel, producing one of the most dangerous and undesirable of school-boy types.

The overgrown girl may have just as strong a sense of inferiority as her big brother, but she

will get her compensation differently. To her, clumsiness and ungainliness are an even greater source of discomfort than to the boy, and it is impossible to say how early in life she may begin dimly to realize that she is at a disadvantage as regards sex-attraction. She will almost inevitably receive less notice from the men friends of her family or from her brothers' school-boy acquaintances than will her more fortunate smaller sisters. If she has musical or artistic talent or good mental capacity, together with a reasonable chance of developing her gifts, she is fairly safe. But if none of these ways is open to her, the remaining path of least resistance is neuroticism. The overgrown girl is generally supposed to be delicate, and often is so. Therefore the way is clear before her to gain a sense of superiority and to attract some notice as an interesting invalid.

Once again let us emphasize the point that neither the boy bully nor the neurotic girl is making these compensatory efforts consciously. The sense of inferiority may be partly conscious, though seldom wholly so; but the plan to escape is almost invariably an unconscious one, and nothing whatsoever is to be gained by pointing out to the schemer what he is really doing, and why. A trained analyst can bring the knowledge into consciousness, but the accusation or even

explanation of the ordinary parent or teacher is worse than useless. The child repudiates the idea violently and indignantly, and the whole trouble is merely driven much deeper by such interference.

The only remedy in the hands of the teacher or parent is to find some legitimate outlet for the pent-up energy, and some satisfactory compensation for the sense of inferiority. To give the child some measure of power and responsibility is one type of possible cure. To remove it from the environment where it most keenly feels its inferiority is another. To teach it some form of manual skill and dexterity is a third. Care must be taken in the giving of responsibility that one is not supplying a further outlet for bullying or cruelty. Responsibility for inanimate objects or for animals is much safer as a rule than responsibility for other children. Very often the child himself will suggest his own remedy—and be refused because it is inconvenient or unpleasing to the rest of the family; not that the rest of the family are unfeeling and selfish, but merely that they do not understand the urgency of the apparently trivial desire. The writer has in mind the case of a girl, the one plain and unaccomplished member of a family of good-looking and talented brothers. This child had one incessant and oft-expressed longing—to own

a dog. For various reasons this was not convenient, and she never had her wish. One wonders whether it was a case of cause and effect that this girl in after-life overstrained an averagely good but not brilliant mentality in striving after academic honours, and became a chronic nervous invalid.

The plan of freeing a child's repressed energy by teaching it a handicraft or giving it opportunity to develop a hobby is not always so easy as it sounds. One hears the worried parent say, 'Yes, we've given him every kind of mechanical toy you can think of. He has a carpenter's bench and a fret-saw and a garden of his own and a microscope and a camera, but he tires of them all in a few weeks.' Now there are two periods when a hobby or a craft is engrossing, (a) when it is brand new and (b) when one has attained real skill in it. But between (a) and (b) there is a gulf of tedium which the ordinary child will not succeed in bridging unaided. He must be spurred on in various ways. Either the craft or hobby must be a part of his routine of life, as it now is in many schools; or it must be shared with companions and encouraged by friendly competition, as in the Boy Scout and Girl Guide movements. Of course there are children for whom no such spur is needed. But we are speaking of the average, not the exception.

A type of child which is somewhat less common than it used to be is that which may be described as the over-dominant type. In any home or school where the child is subjected to a rigid or a spasmodically severe discipline, *administered in a domineering manner*, this type occurs. It is not the rigidity and severity that does the mischief so much as the manner of its application. The natural healthy child hates above all things to be 'bossed', and he retaliates by taking every possible opportunity of 'scoring off' the oppressor. Find any school where the children as a whole show the habit of trying to 'score off' the teacher, and in that school will invariably be found one or two teachers whose idea of discipline and dignity is to shout, or rap out peremptory orders, and never on any account to be found in the wrong. The writer knows of a secondary school where two such members of a large staff were sufficient to produce this reaction among all the pupils in all their contacts with authority. The damage that such an attitude does to these children in after-life is incalculable. It is as true in dealing with children as it is in all departments of life, that the only way to get courtesy is to give it.

Again, very few people seem to realize, even in these days of child-worship, how great and far-reaching is the damage wrought upon a child

by *certain kinds* of parental neglect. So long as the child feels that his parents care for him and are interested in him, and that he is in this respect on a par with other children of his acquaintance, all is well. But if he has reason to suspect that his parents are in any way indifferent to him, the sense of inferiority and insecurity so aroused is likely to be disastrous, and its manifestations most surprising.<sup>1</sup> The following cases illustrate these reactions.

Alice was a little girl of eleven or twelve, the daughter of parents who took no interest in her, and managed on one pretext and another always to 'farm her out' among relatives and friends. She was a clever, handsome, well-grown child, but almost impossible to manage. She could neither read nor write after several years of schooling. She had the unattractive habit of demanding incessant notice from any grown-up people with whom she came in contact, achieving this either by ceaseless chatter and the asking of meaningless questions, by over-demonstrative clinging and fondling, or by various forms of noisy 'showing off'. With younger children she obtained her superiority by bullying and teasing. Investigation proved that Alice was preoccupied with the following problem: 'Does any one ever love you as much

<sup>1</sup> See also pp 66-8.

as your own mother? No, that is impossible. But my own mother does not love me. Therefore I am different from other children and lack something that they have.' Her unconscious method of compensation was to get by force on every possible occasion the attention, superiority, and affection denied to her in the natural course.

Maurice, a boy of fourteen, had been adopted in infancy by a rich and childless couple. These people gave him everything that money could buy, and lavished affection on him, but did not tell him the truth about his parentage. A malicious and jealous acquaintance gave him a half-clue, leading him to believe that his mother had deserted him in infancy. He could obtain no verification of this hint, and spent a morose and unhappy boyhood, unable to settle down to any form of work or play, but for ever in a brown study, cogitating over this bitter fact, that his own mother had repudiated him. Indifference, intense restlessness and longing for change, moods of sullen selfishness, outbursts of violent temper, curious phases of boasting about his father's riches and high social position (the latter a phantasy, the adopted father being a self-made man) characterized his unhappy childhood. When Maurice was about sixteen his adopted father was at last induced to tell him frankly the facts of his birth, after which the



boy's character gradually and painfully righted itself. His indifference and inertia gave place to a keen interest in self-improvement. He studied for the university, took his degree creditably, and embarked on a useful career.

The effect of unnatural neglect or of mystery and ignorance about parentage is not always so evident as in the cases described. One very common result on the child is the production of a dreamy listlessness that is miscalled laziness. In these cases the life-energy which, be it remembered, is always active in some direction, is probably expended in compensating for suspected inferiority by elaborate day-dreams, in which the dreamer is depicted as a hero surrounded on all sides with love and admiration. This particular phantasy is, of course, very common among children, and is a way of compensating for many forms of inferiority other than those relating to parentage.

It should be clearly understood that these remarks about a sense of inferiority arising from lack of normal parental care do not apply to children who are separated from their parents either by death or by genuine force of circumstance. English children who have to be sent home from tropical countries and brought up by strangers too often suffer from mismanagement and want of sympathy; but the difficulties

arising from this state of things are not on a par with those where the children feel that the absence of parental care is (a) deliberate, and due to lack of affection, or (b) shameful, and due to some half-understood and mysterious circumstances.

The position of people who have adopted a child is notoriously a difficult one, the problem of what to say and what not to say being always acute. The two courses most to be avoided are silence and lies. Silence is undesirable even where the child knows the actual and bare facts. He will inevitably weave morbid fancies round them unless the subject is kept healthily ventilated by some means or other. Lies are fatal, because the truth must come out eventually, and when it does the double shock due to loss of respect for the parent-substitute and the effect of the newly acquired knowledge may be very severe, all the more so as the truth has a way of coming to the surface during the difficult years of adolescence, when character is, as it were, semi-liquid and in process of setting. Unpalatable truths of this kind should therefore be placed boldly before the child at the earliest possible age, i.e. as soon as the slightest signs of curiosity manifest themselves. The younger he becomes accustomed to them the less severe the shock, for unpleasant facts

taken frankly and as a matter of course do not strike inwards and set up morbid fancies. It is the things that grown-ups consider too unpleasant to be mentioned that take on gigantic significance in the child's mind.

Nevertheless, when a child has to be told facts which are to the disadvantage of his parents, the utmost care should be taken to put them as charitably as possible. To tell him crudely that his father was a bad man and unkind to his mother is a grave mistake, and may vitiate his judgement of all men or all women in after-life; for it is a well-established psychological fact, of which more will be said presently, that the mother remains throughout life in the unconscious mind of the individual as the prototype of womanhood, and the father as the prototype of manhood. The youngest child can be taught sympathy, tolerance, and pity, and in communicating painful facts these emotions must be called into play.

It should also be realized that one cannot tell a young child anything once and for all. Very few grown-up people take into consideration the fact that what is told to a child of five or six may, by the time he is fifteen or sixteen, have sunk so deep into his unconscious mind that he will asseverate with complete sincerity that he never heard of it.

The writer has in mind the case of a young woman of nineteen or twenty who, having got herself into mental and spiritual difficulties through an orgy of erotic literature supplemented by smatterings of Jung and Freud, declared that she had been brought up completely ignorant of all the physical facts of sex. But to the writer's personal knowledge she had been most carefully taught in early childhood by means of pictures, diagrams, and explanations everything that a child could grasp about sex in animals and human beings. These early lessons had probably been given at a time when she was not particularly curious about such matters—children go through phases of sex-curiosity, but often have long periods when the subject merely bores them—and so had been forgotten as completely as we forget dates in history. Or again, the information may have been distasteful to her, and she may have repressed it deliberately. Whatever be the explanation, the fact remains that children do not necessarily 'know' what you have told them, and that it is essential to keep certain facts well ventilated in their minds, and to make them feel that you are perfectly ready to discuss these at any time. If no other methods serve, a child can be kept in touch with healthful memories of its parents by photographs, or by cheerful celebra-

tions of birthdays and other anniversaries. A child who has not much to thank his father for will insensibly think of him more kindly if 'father's birthday' means a holiday or a treat, and so long as no pretence or false sentiment is involved he will benefit both spiritually and mentally thereby.

In these days when co-education is strongly advocated by many sound authorities, it is not out of place to draw attention in passing to various difficulties which sometimes arise when children of both sexes are educated together. Complete and adequate co-education is not yet common in England, and many of our English schools venture on some small measure of it without wishing to adopt the principle in its entirety. There are schools which take both sexes up to a certain age, there are girls' schools which admit a few little boys, and boys' schools which admit a few little girls.

With the immense question of co-education as a whole it is not possible to deal in this place, but that there are real dangers where the system is partially adopted cannot be denied. It is pretty clear to any one that the sporadic little boy at a girls' school may be made to feel miserably inferior, but the case of the little girl at a boys' school also has its dangers. She associates all day long with companions who are, in many

cases, stronger, hardier, and better at the current organized games than she is, and unless she has the temperament and physique to approximate herself pretty nearly to her boy companions, she is at a continual disadvantage. If she is unable to emulate the boys, she may satisfy her instinctive desire for superiority and notice by allowing herself to be petted and made much of by older boys and the staff. Neither of these methods can be regarded as desirable. Parents who send their little girls to school with their brothers seem to imagine that this makes for a natural and healthful strengthening of the family unity. They forget that once inside the school gates family ties are subordinated entirely to those of school, and that Mary aged eight may not set eyes on Thomas aged ten throughout the entire day. Nor does it increase Thomas's love and respect for Mary to have her tagging after him to and from school, and to be told candidly by his chums that they pity him for having to be bothered with her.

As has been said, it is impossible to enumerate all the causes which give rise to inferiority complexes in children. The child who stutters, who is too fat, who is given too little pocket-money and cannot treat his friends, who has any physical weakness which precludes him from joining in other children's play, who is dressed in

ugly or unsuitable clothes, who has been christened Lancelot or Adolphus or Mesopotamia—there is no end to the minute and ludicrous things which may overshadow such a child's life with a sense of inadequacy, and give rise to behaviour out of all proportion grave in comparison with its cause. I have in mind the case of an otherwise normal girl who could not read at the age of eleven, through having been laughed at publicly in early childhood when she stumbled over long words. There was no conscious obstinacy or refusal, nor even a conscious memory of the early ridicule, but the unconscious resistance and conflict were so strong that all efforts proved vain until the cause of the inhibition was traced and brought into consciousness. Of course not every child that is laughed at reacts in this way, nor does every child who is fat or delicate or ridiculously named develop a complex on the subject. Some do and some do not. The parent and teacher can only watch and observe, helping to straighten out kinks when they occur and before they become established.

The question naturally arises, what in a general way can be done to help children in the inevitable conflict between their instinct for power and their sense of inferiority? The first thing to be clear about is that the instinct for mastery is a natural and wholesome one, and

not in any sense to be deprecated, although like all instincts it can very easily be abused and perverted. If it is repressed and turned inward the individual suffers mentally, morally, and physically. If it is turned outward in wrong directions the community suffers and avenges itself on the individual. Hence proper and legitimate outlets are of the utmost importance.

At this present moment reasonable freedom and self determination are accorded to children in a very large number of English schools and homes, but not many years ago the first efforts made in schools of the elementary type to introduce freedom had most alarming results. The writer knows of two such schools, where the first response of the children to the offer of freedom from restraint was the wanton destruction of every piece of school apparatus and furniture within reach. To many people at the time this seemed a conclusive argument against allowing such freedom. But to others it merely proved the extreme urgency of teaching children to free their energies in right directions. The wantonly mischievous child requires an outlet rather than a punishment; for a child's unconscious is a dynamo of energy, an energy which it is possible to control only after repression has been released.

Having provided, so far as circumstances



allow, a general environment which gives to the child community in family or school reasonable chances of developing rightly the instinct for mastery, there remains the problem of the inferiority complex of the individual child. As a rule it is fairly easy to see what is causing the feeling of inferiority, but in many cases the cause cannot be removed and must be faced. It is worse than useless to try to persuade him that the cause is non-existent. He merely despises you for your blindness or insincerity. What he needs is guidance towards some satisfactory form of compensation for his disability. Many years ago a well-known London doctor had a son who was debarred by an obscure and incurable skin disease from practically every natural outlet to his energies. The boy, in spite of every care, was sinking into a state bordering on imbecility, when it occurred to one of the young assistants in the doctor's surgery that he might be capable of learning a skilled handicraft. A turning-lathe was procured for him and he was taught carpentering and cabinet-making. The intense satisfaction which this outlet gave the lad saved his reason. Nowadays this method of ameliorating the boy's lot would seem an obvious solution to any one skilled in dealing with children labouring under mental or physical disability, but sixty years ago the young surgeon's idea was regarded

as a wonderful inspiration, and earned the lifelong gratitude of the child's father.

In these days there are countless children who are apparently in all respects normal, and yet seem to make a perpetual failure of life at home and at school. No one thinks of taking them to a mental specialist. People merely say, 'What a pity that James has such an unhappy and discontented disposition, so different from his sister Belinda, who is always bright and cheery.' It is the fashion among educationists of to-day to say that there is no such thing as a lazy child. I do not feel certain that they are right. But I am much more certain that no child is born with an unhappy and discontented disposition. If he is unhappy and discontented, it is because the grown-up people responsible for him have not had the ingenuity to discover what childish phantasy is making him so, and what healthy outlet he requires and lacks.

CHAPTER VII

THE SENSE OF POWER  
IN ADULT LIFE

THE psychology of manhood is vastly less simple than that of childhood, and for many reasons. In the child the gulf between the conscious and the unconscious is not wide. His repressions have not had time to go very deep. Moreover, his range of experience has been relatively narrow, and hence his complexes do not involve very many different factors. Again, in dealing with children we have as a rule a very fair general idea of what their past experience has been, and this gives us some clue to the source of their difficulties. In the opinion of the modern psycho-therapist or analytical psychologist, many or most of the neuroses of adults are ultimately traceable to small incidents in early childhood; but these incidents may be buried so deep in the unconscious mind of the middle-aged man or woman that it may take months of patient search to discover them, whereas in the child such happenings are near the surface of memory, and if he chooses he can recall them easily. It may be necessary to overcome a resistance first, but resistance in the average child is slight compared with what is met with in the

ordinary adult.<sup>1</sup> It follows from this that the question of the will to power and the sense of inferiority are much more difficult to deal with simply in relation to adults than in relation to children.

To begin with, as we have seen, the ordinary man or woman is usually quite unaware of the universality of the desire for power. It is a little curious that after centuries of civilization we should still be so blind to the existence of so general a condition. We are all fully aware of the sex instinct as a predominating factor in human life, and only a small minority of people would, if speaking frankly, pretend to deny it in themselves. But the love of power is generally interpreted in the narrow sense of a desire to dominate one's fellow men, and being in this sense an anti-social instinct, it is one we are slow to admit.

Another difficulty in discussing and realizing the workings of the love of power in adults arises from its being in fact inseparable from the sex instinct. In an earlier chapter I have referred to the flow of the life force, describing it as a stream which meets various obstacles in its course. In considering sex and power separately,

<sup>1</sup> In serious cases of mental and moral abnormality, where a child has had a violent shock or is afflicted with some neurosis, resistance may be very strong and repression very deep.

I do not mean to imply that there are two distinct branches of this stream, or that any obstacle can permanently divide the two. Both in human beings and in animals they are fundamentally the same thing, and in the everyday human life of civilized countries the one is constantly used as a substitute for the other. In common metaphor we speak of a man who is 'wedded' to his profession, and we say that the books, paintings, or compositions of an artist are his 'children'. There is a far profounder truth in such figures of speech than we usually recognize. In the present chapter, therefore, we may be said to be dealing largely with the power-aspect of sex, while in a later chapter we shall be concerned to a great extent with the sex-aspect of the will to power.

The simplest method of approach to the problem of the instinct for mastery in adults is to consider first the case of the man or woman in whose life this instinct has normal, free, and healthy play. Take, for example, such types as the successful farmer, the artisan, and the housewife. Here we have people engaged in occupations requiring skill, judgement, and foresight, productive of solid satisfactory results visible to the naked eye, and of well-defined value to the community. The farmer exerts power and uses skill in manipulating the earth,

caring for and directing the work of animals, managing men, planning crops, keeping accounts, and so forth. The greater his skill the greater his wealth, and wealth is for him another source of power. He is free to marry and to find an outlet for his sexual and paternal instincts, so that there is no undue damming back of libido in either of these two normal directions. The skilled artisan is similarly placed, and so to some extent is the efficient housewife. That is to say, there is a large section of the civilized community which has quite as good a chance of balanced normal development leading to sound health and contentment as is necessary. This is not to suggest that all farmers, artisans, and housewives are happy and well-balanced people! The farmer who would rather have been a banker, the artisan who craves for mental rather than manual labour, the housewife who is a frustrated artist or musician—these are not finding an outlet for their native skill, but are performing daily drudgery against the grain, and are just as likely to be neurotic, cruel, and unbalanced as any other members of the community. Nevertheless, in the evolution of humanity from the savage state, affording natural and adequate scope for man's primitive instincts, to the present stage of our civilization, we have in certain directions achieved the

desired end of multiplying and improving healthful outlets, while in other directions we have utterly failed to do so.

There are two very large classes of people in the community for whom a simple and direct satisfaction of the natural instincts is difficult; namely, the city worker in factory, shop, or office, and the unmarried woman. With the social and economic sins and mistakes that have created these classes I am not here concerned. Suffice it that they exist, and form not only an economic and social problem but also a psychological one. For we are confronted by the fact that the greater part of our population is so situated that it must either learn to perform a difficult and delicate process of sublimation, or else endure a miserable and frustrated existence. It is true that every man, no matter how fortunate his circumstances, is morally and spiritually bound to achieve a sublimation of his instincts; but the task is infinitely easier where circumstances are such that the stream of libido is not artificially dammed, but can flow freely along its legitimate channels.

To sublimate a desire or instinct is to find for it a channel other than the primitive and direct one, whereby the energy may discharge itself without harming the community. Every decent-living and harmless man and woman has

achieved some kind and some degree of sublimation. The saint in the true sense of the word is the man who has attained the best kind to the highest degree.

The characteristics of a perfect sublimation are three in number. It must be interesting and pleasurable; it must be beneficial to the community, and it must satisfy the man's ideal for himself. The proverbial maiden lady who satisfies her maternal instinct by lavishing all her care and affection upon a lap-dog has effected a sublimation which satisfies the first condition only. She finds daily pleasure and interest in her pet; but her energy is expended on that which is of no use to the community, and in her moments of facing reality, if she has any, she knows that the outlet is unworthy. It therefore cannot satisfy her ideal for herself.

In Miss Stern's novel *The Back Seat*,<sup>1</sup> the husband who is supported by the abundant earnings of his famous wife, whom he loves devotedly, and who spends his time and tries to satisfy his instinct for power by making useless fretwork ornaments, is in much the same position as the maiden lady. He is less to be pitied in that his wife and children give him a natural outlet for one side of his nature; he is more to be pitied in that he realizes with some

<sup>1</sup> See p. 57



clearness the futility of his sublimation. It may be noted here that his little daughter, who satisfies her thirst for importance by having attacks of hysteria, has not effected any sublimation, because her outlet is one definitely harmful to the family life.

The woman who, 'disappointed in love' or despairing of an opportunity to marry, devotes herself to social service or enters a convent from a sense of duty or to escape from the ennui of home life, may effect a sublimation which satisfies the second and third conditions. But unless she can in some degree find interest and enjoyment in her chosen career, her chance of mental and physical health is not good. The very common case of the daughter who dutifully spends her entire life in looking after her able-bodied parents is in the same class, but she is often less satisfactorily placed as regards the second condition, for her self-abnegation is not always of genuine benefit to the parents.

This form of sublimation has been used rather frequently as the subject of psychological novels. Notable examples are *The Rector's Daughter*, by F. M. Mayor, and *The Life and Death of Harriett Frean*, by May Sinclair.

It is a curious thing to note that the 'home daughter' solution of the unmarried woman's problem is, historically speaking, a modern one.

In pre-Reformation days she was expected to become a nun. Theoretically this was a much better way out of the difficulty, for it is obvious that a whole-hearted devotion to religion, where it exists, perfectly fulfils the three conditions requisite for a satisfactory sublimation. In practice very many of the huge and badly managed religious communities of those times were no better than unwieldy boarding-houses, hot-beds of gossip, petty cruelty, idleness, and worse. It is, in point of fact, impossible to find an automatic and general solution for any human problem, because of the infinite diversity of individuals. The interesting thing to be noticed here is that in those days parents did not expect or even wish to keep their daughters indefinitely in a state of childish subjection and economic dependence at home.

Whence, then, the change in recent times? There are reasons more profound than the mere fact that in Protestant European countries nunneries are rare, or no longer exist. If the practical demand, even apart from the religious inspiration, had persisted, the supply in one form or another would have arisen to meet it. But the nineteenth century brought to these countries, among other characteristics, two very strong ones, materialism and sentimentality. Many people are surprised to find these two

qualities coexistent; yet the fact is not surprising. By sentimentality we mean an artificial stimulation or prolongation of emotion, a keeping alive of a feeling whose vitality is exhausted. The materialist is a sentimentalist, because he hates and shrinks from the idea of the evanescence of enjoyment. He loves the beauty of an ordered life, but turns away from the uncertainty of spiritual adventure. Barrie's play of *Peter Pan*, which came in with the new century, owed its overwhelming appeal to the fact that it mingled the old idea of indefinitely prolonging one happy phase of life with the newer trend towards freedom and divine adventure. A play often owes much of its appeal to one or two happy phrases. A decade before *Peter Pan*, in the last years of the old century, the famous 'curtain' of a play that fascinated and enthralled London ran, 'It is better to be— a little, than to be unhappy—much.'<sup>1</sup> Later came Peter's 'To die is a very great adventure', in which Barrie struck the key-note of the new age.

But to Victorian parents who wished to prolong at almost any cost the happy present, the temptation to refuse that difficult step of renunciation which we all ought to face when our children begin to grow up was too great. They

<sup>1</sup> *The Darling of the Gods*.

had not the spiritual *élan* to throw themselves into the adventure of being left alone together when the children went out to make their own lives; they wished to continue indefinitely the stage of self-satisfaction through parenthood. Unconsciously they felt that it was better to deceive themselves a little than to be unhappy much. For, let us repeat, it is characteristic of every stage of life that it fears the next stage, in which it must lose the satisfactions with which it is familiar, and develop faith in the unknown.

And so the unmarried daughter was sacrificed. She was trained from infancy to believe that 'taking care of father and mother' was her highest duty, her one means of repaying her parents for their self-sacrifice in bringing her into the world, feeding her, and (for the most part) refusing to educate her! It is true that there seems no reason why sons should not have owed the same debt of gratitude—a greater one, because they were usually educated as well as fed. But nobody taught the boy that it was his duty to stay at home and take care of his parents, and oddly enough most people would have felt that it was a very strange and unsatisfactory career for a manly lad to become a 'home son' on a par with the 'home daughter'. The few who adopted this career were considered to be slightly feeble-minded and 'queer'. But in

popular opinion there was nothing at all queer about the middle-aged spinsters who were quite commonly spoken of as 'the children', and who had to ask their father for money to buy stamps and hair-pins.

The daughters seldom rebelled, and that for three reasons. First, the fact that they had not succeeded in marrying tended to give them a sense of inferiority which made rebellion too difficult a psychological undertaking; secondly, there was very little possible alternative for an uneducated woman; and thirdly, the training in the moral and religious conviction that taking care of father and mother was the ideal life for a maiden lady was so thorough that for many years the third condition of an adequate sublimation, viz that it should satisfy the person's ideal for himself, was at least partially fulfilled thereby. The outstanding drawback to this solution was that it often provided no outlet at all for the fundamental instincts. The mother continued to hold all the reins of household and social power, while the daughter played the piano a little, sang a little, did a little 'fancy work' and polite sketching, and so forth. The working-class girl was mercifully saved by economic necessity from this fate, while the country clergyman's daughter sometimes had a better chance than her peers, for parish work.

of various kinds might give some significance, and in certain cases happiness, to her existence.

For pictures of the best type of sublimation achieved by the unmarried daughters of gentility in mid-Victorian days one turns to the books of Charlotte Yonge. But even Miss Yonge, while she would no doubt have upheld the principle that the unmarried woman's duty lay in the home, in practice is compelled to kill off one or both of the parents and provide a batch of younger dependants before she can make a life for her unmarried heroine. Thus Ethel May in *The Daisy Chain* found her fulfilment in caring for her father and her younger brothers, while Wilmet in *The Pillars of the House* lost both her parents and had a whole orphan asylum of small sisters and brothers for whom to legislate. It is obvious that Ethel, who cherishes a romantic adoration for her father and who is mistress of his house and mother to the younger members of the family, has been provided with an almost ideal means of sublimation for her instincts both of sex and of power; while the fact that her father is unquestionably master of the household saves her from the pitfall of becoming too managing and self-satisfied. Wilmet is left more completely in control of the family affairs than Ethel, and it is characteristic of Charlotte Yonge's intuitive insight that she shows her to us as

becoming somewhat hard and domineering in later years, when success has given her self-confidence and the inborn love of managing has developed with too little opposition—at which difficult point her creator marries her off.

For the modern unmarried woman two of the most obvious outlets are teaching and nursing. It is comparatively easy for most women to merge the directly sexual into the maternal instinct, the two being dual manifestations of the same force. In many cases the maternal is already by far the stronger, scores of women marrying primarily because they desire motherhood, and being prepared ruthlessly to sacrifice the claims of the husband to those of the children. The professions of teacher and of nurse both satisfy the two essential conditions of interest and usefulness, and that of the nurse satisfies the third, by fulfilling the ideal that woman has of herself. The average woman can with complacency picture herself as a hospital nurse, for in that capacity she feels herself to be an object of admiration and respect to her fellow men. But for a perfect sublimation balanced development and complete adjustment to the needs of the community are necessary, and here the nurse often fails, for two reasons. The life provides her with very varied experience of a certain kind, but once her training is over it makes very

little call on her mental capacity. She is not encouraged to acquire any wider or deeper knowledge of medicine than was given her in her training course, and unless she rises very high in her profession she seldom has much chance of using intelligent initiative. She goes on getting more and more practical experience, while her mentality stagnates, and presently her conversation begins to consist of nothing at all except professional gossip. The *trained* mind assimilates experience, much as the body assimilates food. It does not retain it in the form of anecdote and detail, but converts it into generalized wisdom. The nurse who has let the muscles of her mind grow slack from want of use becomes incapable of assimilating or generalizing from her mass of particular knowledge, and so merely goes on retailing it over and over to the boredom of her listeners.

Another danger with nurses is that the maternal and humane aspect of the profession may become entirely subordinated to its power aspect. So long as pity, sympathy, and self-sacrifice are active, the maternal or sexual instinct is finding its sublimation; but when all the force of the libido rushes out into an expression of power, and other channels of the individual's life become choked with the sands of weariness and indifference, much damage may



be done. People in the higher positions of the nursing profession have very great power over subordinates, many of whom are entirely at their mercy, for during the years of her training, and more especially during the months of her probation, the young nurse is entirely defenceless against inhumane treatment. She knows that if she protests she may have to go, and that a girl who is sent away from one hospital has a very slim chance of being admitted to another. Her superior, who has such absolute power over the lives and prospects of others, and who does not realize how deep-seated and universal is the temptation to use power cruelly, is thus in a dangerous position. For those of us who have little opportunity to exercise authority it may be comparatively safe to remain ignorant of the psychological workings of our natural instincts, but the man or woman whose instinct for mastery has a wide scope, and who is still in the position of denying that he or she has such a tendency, is a potential danger to the community.

The teaching profession fulfils much less easily than nursing the condition of satisfying the individual ideal. This should not be so, for, as every teacher is told *ad nauseam* at his or her training college, there can be no more lofty and romantic work in life than that of helping to train the next generation to carry on the process

of human evolution. But, say what we will, the fact remains that the teaching profession is suffering and will continue for some time to suffer from the stigma of its past errors and inefficiency. The prototype of the nurse is 'the lady with the lamp'; that of the teacher is 'the dominie with the tawse'. There was nothing romantic or admirable about the desiccated scholar with his birch, terrorizing unwilling morsels of humanity into reluctant book learning. The man who earns his living by hitting the small and helpless cannot be a popular hero. He is a figure of fun. A woman in the same position is an even more repulsive personage. As the years have gone by the practice of teaching through terror has to a great extent died out, but the tradition that a teacher is one who *does business* it is to make children miserable dies very slowly.

Nevertheless this is a profession admirably calculated to provide a satisfying outlet for the energies of women, since at its best it makes a strong appeal to the maternal and protective instincts and also gives plenty of scope for constructive and original mental work. But it carries with it one of the same dangers as nursing, and in a much greater degree. Every teacher, of whatever rank, has the temptation to misuse his or her power, and the higher up the scale the greater the temptation. It might

almost be said that few efficient teachers escape falling in some degree victims to their unconscious love of dominance. Tyranny has been the one outstanding defect of many of our famous head masters and head mistresses, men and women of noble character and exceptional talent. Few teachers of to-day dare to treat with cruelty or injustice the children committed to their charge, though cases such as that depicted in Clemence Dane's *Regiment of Women*, of power brutally employed in tormenting a helpless and sensitive child, are not as uncommon as they should be. But domineering or petty cruelty to subordinates is a common enough abuse in the school-world of to-day, and that to an extent hardly to be believed by those outside the teaching profession.

The cause for this state of things is perhaps to be sought in the fact that it is always much easier to give free and direct expression to an instinct than to sublimate that expression. The woman teacher is, as a rule, asked to live a completely monosexual life, having no companionship beyond that of her women colleagues. It is rare that so complete a sublimation of the sex-instinct as this sort of life demands can be achieved, and considerable repression of that force is almost inevitable. The stream of libido tends to be clogged in regard to

sex, and to discharge itself with undue force in other ways. The temptation to give free play to the instinct for mastery in its lowest and least sublimated forms is therefore strong, and cruelty, often of course of a subtle and refined variety, is the outcome. Moreover, it is proverbial that a released slave is the worst of task-masters,<sup>1</sup> and in proportion to the cruelty and domination at the top of any profession will be the tendency of repressed subordinates to assert themselves in like manner when their turn comes.

Sublimation of the desire for mastery in the case of the male industrial or office worker is in some ways simpler and in others more difficult than in that of the unmarried woman. It is simpler because he is not required to live a monosexual life. He is usually a married man with children and a home of his own, and a very large number of men find sufficient or almost sufficient scope for their energies in the alternation between the monotony of daily work and the interests and recreations of home. Henry Ford, in his so-called *Autobiography*, which is in fact a biography of the Ford motor industry, gives some amazing facts about the attitude of the industrial worker towards monotonous

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the Irish proverb. 'A servant to a servant is a slave to the devil.'

occupations. He maintains that philanthropists and social reformers, in their outcry against the soul-killing monotony of factory labour, are to a great extent projecting on to the worker their own dislike of such monotony. In Ford's experience the vast majority actually prefer work whose sameness entirely eliminates the need for thought and enterprise. He tells of an intelligent man who from choice spent year after year in performing the one small mechanical operation of dipping certain ball-bearings into oil and passing them on to the next man. This worker earned good wages, had several thousands of dollars carefully invested, took an intelligent interest in the money market, but refused any suggested alteration in his daily routine. His home, and the sense of power and security derived from his investments, were to him interest enough.

Mr Ford's experience of the industrial worker is probably not typical. His employees get very high wages, and are shareholders in the business. The output and profits are a matter of direct concern to each one, and the pay is such that most of them can save and invest money. They are thus very differently situated from most factory hands. They have an interest in what they do, even though their task may be in detail uninteresting; and they have money,

which is one equivalent of power. The ordinary English firm, with certain well-known and much-to-be-honoured exceptions, does not grant its employees any such conditions, and there are numberless minor indications among British industrial workers which show that the instinct towards power and mastery has too little play. Apart from the obvious symptom of strikes and labour unrest, the amusements of this class are very significant. Racing, coursing, all forms of betting, and above everything football, are typical outlets for repressed energy and desire for superiority. To back the winner is to be the winner, to own the best whippet, to have better judgement or make a better guess than one's neighbour at the way things are going to turn out, are manifest compensations to the man who feels he is the under-dog in the fight for existence. Better than any of these is football. In watching a game or reading a book we unconsciously identify ourselves with the protagonists. The struggle is, for the moment, our struggle, and this identification is greatly intensified when the fighters are friends of ours, members of our gang. The football match is the perfect substitute for the head-hunting forays by which the young savage proves his prowess and claims his position as a full-grown member of the tribe.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf *Rough-hewn*, by Dorothy Canfield.

The inordinate love for detective fiction among the more educated classes of sedentary office workers is also significant. Such novels take the place of the boy's adventure story, largely because they provide, as it were, a more realizable power phantasy. The effort of imagination needed to identify oneself with Inspector French or Sherlock Holmes, who perform marvels of masterly deduction, and join in exciting chases through the streets of London, is for many people far less than the effort to read oneself into the more remote adventure of Allan Quatermain in unexplored Africa, or of Tarzan among the apes. The man with strong powers of visualization may prefer Haggard's or Burroughs's stories, but to people who find difficulty in calling up an unfamiliar scene the adventure in everyday surroundings makes a stronger appeal. It is perhaps hardly permissible to include novel reading in the list of everyday forms of sublimation, because the average man who reads a story with no object beyond the amusement of an idle hour is merely transporting himself into a harmless world of phantasy, and is not adjusting himself to reality so much as fleeing from it. The novel, the theatre, and the cinema in their lighter aspects are legitimate means of obtaining temporary relief from the conflict of life. Nevertheless, a

study of the kind of book or cinema that satisfies the ordinary man of the day affords a valuable clue to the repressions from which he suffers.

As indicated in the preceding pages, few people succeed entirely in the task of sublimating the instinctive desire for power, and very many almost entirely fail to accomplish it. Jealousy, petty tyranny, certain types of invalidism, petty quarrelling, irritability, some aspects of so-called mother love, various forms of morbid cruelty—all these are everyday manifestations of the maladjustment of the individual to his surroundings.

Many people would differentiate between sexual and other forms of jealousy, attributing the former to a thwarting of the sexual rather than of the power instinct. However this may be, jealousy is in the main an emotion roused by interference with a man's love of power and ownership. Few people are entirely free from it. Sexual jealousy is often regarded as a mark of virility, and hence a cause for pride rather than shame; but if we could remember that we share the emotion with many of the lower animals, and that in the human race it causes a large percentage of the crime, bloodshed, and embittered hatred with which the world is cursed, the estimation of it as a somewhat noble failing might die out. Slandorous gossip is in



the main due to jealousy; for we belittle the human being who we think may be considered in some way superior to ourselves. Professional jealousy is the feeling that makes us grudge another man the success in our own line which but for him might have been ours. We are jealous in friendship and in love, because the more exclusive we are in these matters the greater appears our own power. The desire to be first in the estimation of another human being is one we are not averse from admitting; it has a romantic glamour about it. But in essence it means that we wish to possess that human being in order to satisfy our own instincts in one or another direction.

Petty tyranny, petty quarrelling, and outbursts of irritability are the unlovely manifestations of unsublimated instinct which we keep mainly for home use. We quarrel about trifles, pretending to ourselves that the trifle embodies a principle. But usually the only principle involved is the love of our own way for its own sake. In the heat of the moment the conscious self supplies a perfectly rational cause for dispute, because we do not care to admit to ourselves that we are fighting merely as a means of self-assertion. An hour or so later, perhaps after irretrievable damage has been done, we wonder what it was all about. This is notori-

ously the case when civilized nations go to war. The country that declares war has one real motive, namely, the desire for power. Looking back now to the immediate 'cause' of the Great War, it is difficult to remember and appalling to realize that it was *officially* the result of an assassination in Serbia.

Outbursts of irritability arise commonly as the result of some trifling check to the individual's sense of power and self esteem. Something makes him feel inferior, and he asserts himself at the expense of the next person whom he is able to bully with impunity. A great number of our perennial jokes and stock situations in drama or fiction turn on this psychological fact. The man who comes home from business after a day of somewhat unsatisfactory work proverbially flies out at his wife, his children, and the cook. The retired colonel of fiction has one un-failing characteristic—he is peppery; for susceptibility to irritation about trifles is the natural reaction of a man who, having been ruler over many things, is compelled to retire in his prime to a position of obscurity on an inadequate pension. The mother-in-law is the woman who cannot resist the impulse to continue to exert her power over her daughter's life and affairs. The village policeman, the favourite butt of rural humour, is the butcher's or the cobbler's

son who went to school with us, and now has, absurdly and gallingly, the power to take us in charge if we are drunk or disorderly. We re-establish our own sense of equality by making him a laughing stock.

Among women one of the commonest false sublimations of the instinct for power is invalidism, sometimes chronic, sometimes adapted to the occasion. There are countless women and not a few men who have found in convenient heart attacks a very good family substitute for Aladdin's wonderful lamp, which enabled its owner to procure whatever he desired. The human being, whether man, woman, or child, whose family has been 'told by the doctor that he must on no account be upset' is in an even more dangerous position as regards his soul than as regards his body, for there is nothing but his own sense of decency or religion to prevent him from becoming a monster of selfishness.

Chronic ill health of an indefinite kind, in oneself as well as in other people, should always be suspected as a ruse of the unconscious mind, adopted in its effort to monopolize attention. The power of the mind over the body is quite sufficient to produce perfectly genuine symptoms of ailments which will achieve the desired end. In years gone by it was not necessary to have

definite, and especially impolite, symptoms. A Victorian lady might spend her life on a sofa, and be waited on hand and foot, merely because she was 'delicate'. To be vaguely and genteelly an invalid was in those days<sup>1</sup> a well-recognized feminine avocation. To-day we are not let off so easily. Not only are our families shrewder and less amiable, but we cannot so readily hoodwink ourselves. We need specific symptoms, and we achieve them. Coughs, colds, headaches, indigestion, neuralgia, neuritis, and a hundred other very real ailments attack the modern woman whose love of power is inadequately satisfied. It is by no means always general attention or sympathy that she wishes to attract. It may be that her husband is too preoccupied with his own affairs, or that her children wish to leave home. The woman who has a full and adequate life but lacks the one object of desire, such as the undivided attention of husband or child, is quite as likely a victim of this kind of neurosis as one whose life as a whole is thin and unsatisfying. And it is advisedly that one uses the word victim, for such a person is actually the helpless prey of her own unconscious mind. Consciously she may bitterly resent her own ill health and use every effort to overcome it. The greater the effort and resentment, the keener

<sup>1</sup> See Jane Austen's *Sanditon*

becomes the conflict in the unconscious mind. The entire energy may be exhausted by this conflict, and the physical body may thus become more rather than less at the mercy of disease. Moreover, the unconscious mind knows that the 'heroic struggle' against ill health may be an even more effective weapon in the fight to gain attention and sympathy than the ill health itself. It is practically impossible for a person who is suffering from definite and painful physical symptoms to believe that these are self-induced. With the cough or headache actually present, the mind refuses to face the added misery of such a humbling conviction. In the opinion of the writer, this state of things is beyond the control of the sufferer, so far as conscious effort is concerned. The only advantage of such effort is that it may if fairly vigorous lead to the general collapse known as 'nervous break-down', necessitating one or another form of mental treatment.

Invalidism is not the only weapon by means of which we can maintain an unfair hold over those we love. We can achieve our end equally well and at less personal inconvenience by rendering them helpless and dependent upon us. The most obvious cases of this are found in the relations between mother and child, but it is sufficiently common between husband and

wife, and between friends. The husband or the friend is then forced into the position of child-substitute to the woman who wishes to exert her power and satisfy her maternal instinct. It is the successful mother who is most tempted to prolong the maternal stage unduly. She has won her child's devoted affection, and has enjoyed the task of supplying his every need adequately and efficiently. She has made his clothes, bathed and dressed him, taken care of all his belongings, nursed him through baby illnesses, taught him his prayers and heard him say them, been his playmate and confidante, amused and cared for him all day long. She has had no rival, because no one else has taken the trouble to compete with her for her son's devotion. He does not enjoy the companionship of other little boys and girls, since he finds they will not give space and elbow-room to his egotism. He is too delicate to go to school at the usual age, and is taught at home by a governess.

Every one has met cases of this kind, where a normal boy or girl has been ruined by mothering. The writer has in mind a well-grown boy of fifteen. He is at a public school, which he hates and calls 'a prison'. He wants no companionship save that of his mother. In the holidays they are always together, and he is then

perfectly happy. He does not read books himself, but he 'likes mummy to read to him'. He wanders about with his favourite toy, a child's air-gun, over his shoulder, letting this off quite aimlessly, just for fun. At night his mother bathes him and puts him to bed. To the casual observer he is half-witted, for he has a vacant, childish grin, and giggles when he speaks. But he is not imbecile; he has merely stood still at seven years old, the victim of 'mother-love'. This kind of case is commoner with girls than with boys, partly because public opinion is stronger against keeping a boy in leading-strings.

Every manifestation of the desire for power meets to a greater or less extent the opposing force of public opinion. The herd reacts against the individual in proportion as the individual assumes an attitude of undue domination, and public opinion is reflected in the man's judgement or criticism of himself. To some extent he sees himself with the eyes of the community, and attempts to conform to what is expected of him. If he is to satisfy his own desires and at the same time keep his self-esteem, he must hoodwink himself somehow; and this he does by providing a rational and pleasing reason for self-gratification. He realizes that in exercising power over the community he tends to provoke resentment. But what if the power be exerted

not for personal gratification but for the good of the many? To have great power and to use it for others is god-like. Hence the philanthropist.

Philanthropy, as already indicated in Chapter V, is either the supreme sublimation or the most blinding of rationalizations. In the completely selfless person it may be the former; but this type is so rare at the present stage of our development as to be outside the range of generalization. The saint is *sui generis*, and moreover lives in a fourth-dimensional world somewhat beyond ordinary comprehension. At the other end of the scale is the clever egoist, who realizes that power, adulation, and newspaper applause are the most costly and the most gratifying luxuries that money can buy; but he again is a somewhat extreme type. In the average man who turns his attention seriously towards philanthropy, by means either of endowment or of personal service, egoism and altruism are inextricably mixed. It is not possible to separate self-gratification from the love of humanity. No matter how secretly and unobtrusively the work is done, no matter how rigorously the element of public applause is excluded, self-applause will remain, and to some natures self-applause is the most profound of all gratifications. Put in terms of religion, spiritual pride remains the most subtle and ineradicable of the Seven Deadly Sins.



Therefore let it be once more emphasized that the person who attains mental balance is he who recognizes and faces the impurity of his own hidden motives. A cynical repudiation of all good intent in oneself and in others is as unbalanced as a conviction of one's own righteousness, but the philanthropist is relatively safe only when he acknowledges frankly to himself the element of self-satisfaction in his work. The person who says 'I give freely and look for no return, I wear myself out for the sake of others, I accept honours and responsibility unwillingly; the money that I receive for my work is nothing to me, I do not want gratitude', is being hoodwinked by his unconscious, and is performing an elaborate rationalization <sup>1</sup>

An enormous amount of this kind of rationalization prevailed during the Great War. Non-combatants, male and female, the individual, the firm, the corporation, all saw themselves in a rosy glow as 'doing their bit' and 'carrying on'. People did not consider it decorous to realize that they were doing more interesting work and getting better pay than ever before. Those who had never yet been in useful or authoritative positions had an outlet for their energies, and many were the better for it, but others became drunk with power and self-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Tension*, by E. M. Delafield.

importance. A curious and interesting result of the demobilization of the women government-workers was that the market became flooded with young women who would not return to their humdrum activities and subordinate pre-war status, but clamoured for what they called 'organizing jobs'. Every one wanted to organize; no one was content to be organized. Every one had developed an unsuspected genius for dominating the situation, and in many cases this genius was real, and the necessity for relinquishment of office tragic.<sup>1</sup>

Another common rationalization of the desire for power is the excuse of 'efficiency'. 'I have far too much to do, but no one else quite knows the ropes, so I cannot delegate very much of my work.' 'I really ought not to undertake anything more, but there seems no one else who will, so I needs must.' 'Yes, I find the job very heavy, but I would rather do it myself than see some one else doing it badly.' This last rationalization, like many others, is supported by a proverb—'If you want a thing well done, do it yourself', to which may be opposed the enlightened saying of Coventry Patmore—'For want of me the world's course will not fail'

An uglier manifestation of the power instinct is rationalized by people who are cruel to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Galsworthy's study of Fleur Forsythe

children or subordinates. The cruelty is said to be entirely for the good of the victim. Old saws such as 'Train up a child in the way he should go' or 'Spare the rod and spoil the child' are used as a cloak for diabolical cruelty and brutality. And there are many ways beside that of corporal punishment by which the strong can torment the weak. The parent who finds out where a child is most sensitive and uses his power to produce mental suffering is not at all uncommon, and is unfortunately beyond the reach of any Humane Society. The vice of sadism<sup>1</sup> is often written about as though it pertained only to the morally depraved. But, on the contrary, it is to be met with every day among quite nice people like ourselves.

In the preceding pages I have attempted to deal with some of the chief manifestations of the love of power, treating them for the purpose of clearness as though they were distinct from those of the sexual instinct. Dr. Adler supports his theory—i.e. that the desire for power checked by the sense of inferiority forms the mainspring of all human activity—with so many arguments and such a wealth of example that readers of his books are perhaps convinced for the moment that he alone has found the clue to the human unconscious. Freud's writings and

<sup>1</sup> See p. 34.

lectures to the effect that the sexual instinct is the fundamental urge are even more convincing. In effect Adler says that sex is a manifestation of the power instinct, while Freud says that the love of power is an offshoot of the sexual instinct, and the examples and experiments cited by the one can be used with a little alteration of the view-point to prove the thesis of the other writer.

Similarly many of the instances given above are capable of two interpretations, and in the following chapters on the sexual instinct consideration of the will to power cannot be eliminated. In practice it is not possible to segregate either motive, though for purposes of study the attention may be focused on one or the other.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE SEX INSTINCT

**THE** first step towards any understanding of the psycho-analyst's treatment of the sexual instinct lies in an endeavour to realize how the great analysts define the term, for their use of it is very widely different from our own.

In thinking of sex we are accustomed to consider merely the relations between male and female organisms which have for their object the perpetuation of the species, together with the emotional effects directly arising from these relations. But just as the desire for power has been shown to have an infinitely wider range of psychological significance than the everyday use of the phrase might indicate, so to the analytical psychologist the term 'sexual instinct' involves a wide range of cause and effect quite outside its accepted colloquial significance.

Freud and Jung, in their researches into the causes of human behaviour, and more especially of human neuroses, seem to have begun by defining sexual libido or energy somewhat in the narrower sense, but have rapidly expanded their definition until it includes every manifestation of love, affection, or attraction known to the human race. Thus by sexual libido is now

understood the fundamental cause of every outgoing of the individual towards the object. The thrill of ecstasy called forth by a snow-capped mountain peak, a field of bluebells, a sun-lit sea, an exquisite musical phrase, a poem, a picture—the warm affection you feel for your brother, your school-friend, your gardener, or your dog—the love of mother for child and of child for mother—the girl's harmless delight in her own beauty of form—the passionate absorption of the boy in his new hobby—the feeling of the sculptor for the clay—the devotion of the saint to God—these, not less than the love of man for woman, are outpourings of the sexual libido.

In so far as the early exponents of analytical psychology endeavoured to put their view of libido before the general public, they succeeded for the most part only in arousing disgust and revulsion. Groping in the darkness of an unexplored region, dealing experimentally with abnormal specimens of humanity, hampered as all scientific pioneers must be by a lack of vocabulary in which to express new ideas, they managed to convey to the public the impression that all the loftiest and most sacred emotions of humanity are but disguised and cloaked manifestations of lust and of perverted or diverted physical sexuality. It will be years before the misconception is lived down.

To obtain a clearer light upon this inevitably complex subject, let us revert to the description of the one outflowing stream of energy (pp. 40-46). Libido, life force, the power of the Holy Spirit, or whatever the individual thinker prefers to call it, is manifested everywhere throughout creation, and in the animal kingdom at least it shows itself under the instincts for mastery and for love. Among the lower animals these instincts are exercised mainly on the physical plane. Mastery there means the survival of the strongest animal, and love is the sexual urge towards the mate and the offspring. Higher up the evolutionary scale comes man, and in him the stream of libido runs no longer in the shallow and narrow channel of physical expression. Already in primitive man tributary streams of knowledge and experience have added to the volume of the river and enabled it to widen and deepen its bed, and in the saint or the genius the energy has become a wide and mighty torrent, perhaps within measurable distance of its divine and infinite bourne. For as the river of water in its lower courses drains, through its affluents, an ever wider area, and becomes a more powerful agent of erosion, so the stream of libido is fed by wider and wider areas of experience, which increase its volume and give it more power to mould the life through which it pours. Power,

then, is no longer the power to destroy, and love is no longer a means of physical satisfaction and enjoyment, for greed and destruction have ceased to be attractive to the highly evolved man. Nevertheless, as the water that forms runnels down the side of a hill is the same in kind as the water of the Amazon, so the libido which causes the animals to mate and bring forth their young is the same that inspires a Saviour to die for love of humanity.

In all its manifestations the sexual instinct is closely related to the creative act, and is in a measure frustrated and incomplete unless it can culminate in such an act. It is necessary for complete satisfaction that one should in some way unite oneself with the object of outgoing libido, and that the union should be creative in its result. Thus the pleasure derived from the contemplation of a beautiful landscape falls short of ecstasy unless it can be transmuted. The artist knows how to transmute such pleasure into poem, painting, or music, and the man who is skilled in religion can create from it an act of union with God. These people understand the art of raising aesthetic satisfaction to the point of ecstasy. To those who do not understand it, the contemplation of beauty merges insensibly into pain, and if that pain is examined it will be found to consist in a vague



but poignant feeling of frustration. Few of us who are at all susceptible to the beauties of nature can have failed to experience this feeling. Children recognize it and say, 'It is so beautiful it makes you sad.' Again, men skilled in the art of friendship have in all ages found and given utterance to the truth that friendship demands a creative outlet if it is to come to perfection.<sup>1</sup> Even the relation between human beings and domestic animals is subject to this law. The feeling that a shepherd or a shooting man has for his dog is, in a subtle way, both deeper and healthier owing to the fact that they are associated in the performance of a task which neither can achieve without the other.

In dealing with childhood and adolescence it is important to notice to what extent and in what direction the sex instinct of the individual manifests itself. In its specialized physical aspect it develops to widely different degrees in different people. Even in very young children this is noticeable. Many children are interested in sex before they can walk or talk. Some show such interest during their babyhood, but lose it as childhood advances. In some the interest persists as a constant factor from infancy onwards. More often one finds phases of pre-occupation alternating with periods of indiffer-

<sup>1</sup> e.g. Plato.

ence or positive distaste. The question as to whether these variations are due to early environment or are innate in the personality is one that is not yet at all clearly determined, but the fact that they exist is obvious to every one who has had to do with young people.

At the present day it is the fashion to endeavour to give sex-instruction to children of all ages, and the practice is of course fundamentally healthy and desirable. But too few people realize how impossible it is to tell a child what it does not at the moment care to know. It is assumed that sex-curiosity is universal among children, but this, so far as my own experience goes, is by no means the case. To a child who is not at the moment curious, the most carefully administered instruction may seem unintelligible and tedious, and while it reaches the hearing may fail completely to reach the comprehension. As a result, all trace of knowledge will have faded from the mind in a very short time (see p. 127). On the other hand, to withhold information from the curious is to court disaster. To a great number of children it is essential, as a condition of mental and physical health, that the fullest possible explanation of the sexual functions be given at an early age. It is not enough for them to know in a vague and general way 'where babies come from'. They

must also understand as exactly as possible both the function of the father and also the way in which birth takes place. Many children, having been vaguely taught, and being intensely and almost unceasingly preoccupied with the question, evolve curious phantasies. One of the commonest is that birth occurs through the mouth. Another is that it occurs through the navel or anus. These phantasies are definitely undesirable first because in some mysterious way they fail to satisfy the child, and so keep his mind in a state of morbid unrest; and secondly because they tend to centre the attention on certain parts of the body, and so give rise to undesirable habits, of which the *least* objectionable is that of incessant playing with the mouth.

This latter habit, so common among children, is always worth looking into. The child who sucks and chews pencils, india-rubber, handkerchief, thumbs, and fingers, is using these articles as a substitute for the rubber 'comforter'. He is in his unconscious mind reverting to the infantile stage, and refusing to face deprivation of the comfort and satisfaction that the infant derives from the food and care given by the mother. It is merely another instance of the refusal to take the next step in life, to which reference has so frequently been made. But, apart from the sucking habit, many children

have a constant desire to put everything into the mouth, some will endeavour, while sitting in an absent minded reverie, to force the whole hand down the throat. Psychologists have come to the conclusion that all this oral pre-occupation, whether sucking, chewing, or merely fidgeting, is connected in the unconscious with sex and power phantasies, and where such habits are observed one should at least take steps to discover whether there is any repressed sexual curiosity.

Nevertheless it is unwise to ask direct questions or offer unsolicited information. Both these methods may cause a child to retreat into an impenetrable reserve. There are many indirect ways of letting a child feel that such subjects are not taboo, and once he knows this he will ask for the information he requires. A child who is feeling curiosity will nearly always show it by making emphatic statements which are intended as challenges to the grown-up. Ignore his statement and he will repeat it over and over again, often exhibiting a strong emotion of anger or excitement. Thus the child who prances about the nursery chanting 'I know where baby came from. An angel brought him', is asking for information. If his curiosity is ungratified, he may proceed to embroider his phantasy 'I saw the angel bring him. He came in at the nursery

window and said to me "here's a little brother for you", and then he flew away.' He feels that if he goes on inventing tales which he knows to be untrue, some one in time will accept his challenge, and possibly refute them by revealing the truth.

In the case of a child with strong sexual instincts the axiom that knowledge is power may be taken very literally. His unsatisfied curiosity thwarts not only his sex but his power instinct, and one of the commonest compensatory outlets is theft. It has been proved up to the hilt by psychologists who have specialized in the treatment of the child delinquent<sup>1</sup> that petty theft in children is almost always traceable to sexual trauma of one kind or another. It is very difficult to convince the general public of this fact. That a child will steal either money or other objects simply because his sex education has been inadequate or infelicitous seems out of all reason. But sex is power, knowledge of sexual matters is power, and ownership is also power. To seize unlawfully one form of superiority because another form is denied is a logical proceeding and a very common one. But the logic of the unconscious mind is simpler, cruder, and more direct than our conscious reasoning. In the

<sup>1</sup> See W. Healy's *Mental Conflicts and Misconduct*, and *The Individual Delinquent*.

unconscious we do not criticize ourselves, and we have no sense of the ridiculous. We see nothing absurd in the substitution of a stolen half-crown for an unsatisfied curiosity. Money and knowledge are both symbols of power and therefore interchangeable.

This pathological stealing is often very difficult to detect. In tracing an ordinary thief we are guided by factors such as motive, past character, and behaviour during cross-examination. But the type of stealing under discussion is usually without any apparent motive. A child will steal money when he has plenty, or will take it and throw it away; or he will take other objects for which he can have no conceivable use. In a good many cases another very curious phenomenon appears. The action which is prompted by the unconscious mind remains buried therein, and knowledge of it does not emerge into consciousness. That is to say, the culprit does not know himself that he is guilty, and is therefore unable to confess.<sup>1</sup> The thefts are committed in a state of, as it were, waking somnambulism. We are all subject to this state in a greater or less degree. We perform some habitual action, such as getting up and ringing a bell, or turning out an electric light, or locking

<sup>1</sup> Cf. case described in Chapter IX, and see also *The Young Delinquent*, by Cyril Burt.

a door, and two minutes after we are unable to say whether or no we have performed it. The conscious self gave no heed to the action, because it was habitual and without interest. Pathological theft may avoid contact with the conscious mind partly because its motive is a conflict which lies wholly in the unconscious, and partly because the conscious mind refuses to countenance it as a possible action. However this may be, the undeniable fact remains that complete amnesia<sup>1</sup> is a symptom very commonly associated with kleptomania

To avoid symptoms of this kind it is desirable to watch carefully all children who show any of the numerous signs of interest in sex, and to see to it that their curiosity is satisfied in a normal manner as it arises. It is not to be imagined that early interest in these matters should be in any way deplored or condemned. It is merely a matter of temperament. Some girl children frankly prefer boy companions, and are relatively uninterested in their own sex, and the converse is true of boys. Many girls have an overwhelming interest in everything that pertains to motherhood. But where these interests are evinced, one may be quite certain that a strong desire to know and understand exists, and should be satisfied. It is stupid to suppose that

<sup>1</sup> See note, p. 177.

a child for whom dolls and babies have an irresistible fascination is without curiosity as to the origin of babies. If she is, then one might almost have doubts as to her intelligence.

It is a commonplace at the present day to admit that children may be injured in health by shocks accidentally received in regard to sexual matters. But people often fail to realize how very slight an occurrence constitutes a 'shock' to a child. It does not require a revolting or abnormal or indecent experience to occasion this. The shock lies in the suddenly acquired knowledge, or worse, the suspicion of knowledge, and some children are vastly more sensitive than others in these respects. Thus a picture or statue of nude figures, the sight of a mother feeding a baby, or of domestic animals in a state of pregnancy, may cause grave emotional disturbance because the child *partly understands* it, whereas real indecency or obscenity may pass entirely over his head because he has no clue to its significance. Any matter whatsoever concerning which parents and elders are conspicuously and pointedly silent or evasive tends to take on a dark significance to the child, who argues, 'Mother wouldn't hush me up unless it were something horrible and disgusting and not fit to talk about.' In girls partial knowledge of the facts of sex and childbirth is particularly



dangerous for two reasons. In the first place a girl in whom the maternal instinct is strong may develop a quite unnecessary conflict in the unconscious between desire to have children and horror of birth. Again, untold numbers of young girls must have gone through such tortures of mind as Dame Ethel Smythe recounts in her autobiography, when, having indiscreetly kissed a young man at a dance, she spent the next few months of her existence in a nightmare of horror lest, as a result of this crime, she should be about to have an illegitimate baby. Dame Ethel could laugh at this experience many years later, but she admits that at the time it almost destroyed her health and nervous control.

Recent investigation into the psychological development of children has shown that the child tends to pass through various stages in the development of the sexual instinct, of which I shall deal only with three which are outstanding. During the first of these the child's interest is centred almost wholly in himself. He is, to employ the much abused Freudian terminology, in love with himself. To this stage the clumsy but useful term narcissistic has been applied. The baby Narcissus is completely absorbed in his own body and its needs. He wants his mother's undivided attention, his mother representing to him food and bodily comfort. He is intensely

interested in his own limbs and in experimenting with their possibilities. He exhibits harmless pride in running about and showing himself off unclothed. In short, his outgoing enthusiasm finds its object in self. In some children this absorption is almost complete, and mothers go through much unnecessary anxiety in their vain endeavour to instil altruism into the small egotist. 'You'll save some of your sweets for John and Mary', says Mother to Peter. 'No', replies three-year-old Peter with alarming candour, 'I'd rather give them my potatoes. *Nasty* potatoes.' A little later, frank greed gives way to frank boasting. Listen to two small children's typical conversation. 'I', says Mary, 'have a dolls' house with a real piano and real electric light', to which Jane replies with a fine relevance, 'Our cat has kittens and mother says I can have one for my own.'

At a later stage the child emerges into what is somewhat alarmingly described as the homosexual phase. His interest moves gradually from the self to the herd, and centres in companions and elders of his own sex. He wants to go to school, and his class, his masters, and his chums are all-absorbing. His heroes are his father, his big brother, or another chap's big brother, and he affects to despise girls big and little. The girl goes through exactly the same phase, and is

equally happy and absorbed in her own sex. One of the most valid arguments against co-education is based upon the natural instinct of each sex towards segregation during these formative childish years.

Between the ages of fourteen and seventeen or eighteen the third or heterosexual stage sets in, and the adolescent develops some kind of interest in the opposite sex. This may be gradual and imperceptible for a long time, or it may on the other hand be sudden and well marked. In a great number of English children it shows itself simply and solely in the form of an awakening interest in the parent of the opposite sex. The girl to whom father has meant very little in comparison with mother finds herself realizing her father as an individual, a real factor in life. The boy's attitude to mother and sisters alters insensibly. He begins to regard a pretty sister as an asset rather than a liability.

This time of increasing preoccupation with the parent of the opposite sex is one of the most critical in a child's whole life. To the girl the father becomes unconsciously the typical man and therefore the typical husband, and her ideas of love and marriage will be profoundly influenced by him.<sup>1</sup> For it must not be assumed

<sup>1</sup> See *The New Psychology and the Parent*, by Dr. Crichton Miller.

that by interest in the father we necessarily mean friendly interest. The adolescent is proverbially critical in judgement, and if a girl wakes up at fifteen or sixteen to a feeling of contempt, dislike, or fear of her father as a personality, there is a strong likelihood that she will refuse to take the step onward from homosexuality towards heterosexuality, and will go through life with a distaste not only for marriage, but for men as a whole. This is a grave disadvantage even to a woman who enters on a career other than that of marriage. A sane and balanced attitude towards men, and a sympathetic understanding of their point of view, are as essential to the professional or business woman as it is to the wife. A very great number of girls become neurotic and difficult during adolescence, and remain nerve-ridden, repressed, and unbalanced throughout life, in consequence of failure to establish healthy relations with their fathers. They remain fixed in the homosexual stage, and go through all the most difficult years of physical development either without any adaptation to sexual reality, or else with a very undesirable bias on the subject. It is open to a woman to find her chief interests in life with friends and colleagues of her own sex, and this is a perfectly legitimate and healthy sublimation of instinct so long as she realizes her position

and understands her own psychology clearly. But at the present day, when girls' school life has made the homosexual stage so full of happiness and interest, and when three or four years at college give an opportunity of prolonging that stage far beyond its natural term, there are a number of girls who remain homosexual in their mental and spiritual outlook while their physical sex instinct is fully developed and vigorously demanding expression. They do not in the least realize the situation, and in ignorance and innocence may attempt to find physical satisfaction in ways which if discovered would bring them under the ban of the community. In such cases, undesirable practices innocently begun too often lead to situations which wreck a whole life.

In boys the transition from the homosexual to the heterosexual life is just as difficult, but its dangers are more fully recognized, and more effort is made to enable them to realize the situation and to avoid its pitfalls. They encounter the same problem as girls when the age arrives at which the women of their family begin to attract their critical attention. But the boy who then fails to find in his mother and sister a standard of life that satisfies his ideals does not as a rule refuse to face sexual reality. Instead, he faces it with a low conception of what to expect from women. He marries a wife in whom he

actually looks for lower mental and moral standards (except in one direction) than his own, and he founds a family with an inferior mother for his children.

This whole question of the homosexual is one that demands very much greater understanding and more direct treatment than our present-day standards of social behaviour have permitted. There are individuals in whom the homosexual trend has become so deeply fixed that they are unable to adjust to normal heterosexual life. They are not always of a low-grade type either morally or intellectually. It is the man who suffers most under these circumstances, for instead of being classed with those who have a psychological difficulty, he finds himself liable to legal prosecution. As a better understanding of this condition develops, society ought certainly to be able to make some use of these individuals instead of merely pillorying them as outcasts.

The whole problem of the sexual life in the civilized community would be enormously simplified if there could be a more general realization of its wider implications. As before said, activity of the physical sex-organs is but one specialized manifestation of the vitalizing energy which permeates creation. Normally that part of the stream of libido which has its outlet through sexual interest is vastly wider and deeper than

most of us realize, and the reason this channel is so frequently dammed or seriously obstructed is that social conditions place an obstruction in the way of physical sex outlet. The obstruction may be great or small according to individual circumstances. If a man or woman is passionately in love and cannot marry, the obstruction is very great, and to free the channel sufficiently to ensure health of mind and body may then be a heroic task. Again, to the man or woman who has the physical sex instinct particularly strongly developed the obstruction is a serious one. But to a large number of people the difficulty is not in reality very great. The damming is due to lack of self-knowledge, to misdirected imagination, and to bad habits of thought, for as long as we believe ourselves to be thwarted in any particular direction we are thwarted. The king who wanted Naboth's vineyard to round off his estate was convinced that without that piece of land he could never know a moment's happiness. The girl who has been brought up to believe that no woman is ever really satisfied unless she is married, the boy who is led to understand that sexual indulgence is necessary to his health, have been carefully trained to a sense of frustration. The channel for them has been artificially blocked.

Young people who feel the unrest and craving

of developing sex-instinct very commonly saturate their imaginations with erotic literature. They do this more or less in ignorance, not at all realizing that they thereby stimulate the craving instead of satisfying it. In seizing a momentary relief they aggravate the disease.

Those in charge of the young frequently take a great deal of trouble to provide outlets, and to train them in right methods of sublimation. But it is necessary to do more than this. The only sure way to reach a goal is to have it clearly and constantly in view. The hardest kind of battle is one with an unknown adversary in the dark. How many people try for years to cope with repressed instincts, in more or less complete ignorance of what they are 'up against', and of what kind of victory is possible or desirable! Hundreds of girls are still brought up on the tacit understanding that unless and until they marry they do not possess any sexual instincts, and are given not even the most elementary help towards direct sublimation. There is a certain type of girl who, when school restraints and compulsions are removed and exchanged for the freedom and self-determination of college life, falls at once into habits of mind and body which make sublimation impossible. She gives up games and all forms of strenuous exercise, she steeps her mind in the erotic literature before



mentioned; she divides her time between sedentary bookwork and loafing about at cafés or in other girls' rooms; she develops for a fellow student or tutor a romantic passion which she calls friendship, and carries to very undesirable lengths because she never allows herself to recognize that it is mainly erotic in its nature. By these means she sets up a violent conflict in the unconscious, and after undergoing months of physical and emotional misery she has an hysterical breakdown which is euphemistically ascribed to 'overwork'. A boy who indulges in this kind of friendship knows pretty definitely where he ought to draw the line, and if he does so draw it the relationship may be one of the finest things in his life. In my experience girls fail to draw it out of sheer ignorance. They argue that sex is a matter between men and women, and therefore can have nothing whatsoever to do with friendship. They require to be taught as a matter of course that the thrill of excitement which accompanies any new adventure in life is in its essence a 'falling in love', and needs careful watching.

In a novel by Leonora Eyles called *Hidden Lives* a vivid picture is drawn of the possibilities and impossibilities of sexual sublimation under a considerable variety of conditions. The author takes so many different instances that it is

impossible to consider them all here, but a few may serve to illustrate the points under discussion. There is the ascetic, a priest who has made a fetish of physical chastity. He approaches it from the point of view of the person who longs and craves for indulgence, but practises self-denial for its own sake, as a sacrifice to God. He succeeds fairly well until he falls in love with an actual woman. There is no obstacle to marriage except his own ascetic ideal (he is not under a vow), but the conflict ends for him in complete physical and mental disaster. There is the middle-aged woman who has refused the chance of marriage because she felt she was 'needed at home'. As her parents are both wealthy and able-bodied, the need is not sufficient to make a life for her, and she spends fifteen or twenty years in fretting for the lover she has sent away, until her erotic dreams and imaginings produce a moral conflict which ends in a 'nervous break-down'. She has never envisaged sublimation at all. There is a woman doctor who loves a man she cannot marry, and who, after agonizing failures and vicissitudes, achieves the complete sublimation of sainthood in a life of human service. There is a man who is in love, but decides that in his particular case work is a better sublimation than marriage. Because he realizes whole-heartedly that altruistic work can

be a complete outlet for the sexual instinct, he succeeds magnificently. But the author is compelled by the exigencies of probability to make both her successful protagonists doctors and psycho-therapists, in order that their complete self-comprehension may appear credible.

The psychological interest of this book lies in the clarity with which the author sees and sets forth the fact that successful sublimation depends on a realization of the nature of the struggle. The priest who fails and the doctor who succeeds are both devoted heart and soul to engrossing altruistic work, and are both in love with a woman whom no social obstacle debars them from marrying. The priest fails because he endeavours to thwart his instincts by a frontal attack upon them. The doctor succeeds because he deliberately, though painfully, redirects his energies. The former attempts to dam his channel entirely, and the dam bursts; the latter recognizes an obstacle, and allows the current to flow freely round and over it.

A very large number of the cases dealt with by the modern psycho-therapist are cases of sexual repression or suppression. His work has its own definite technique, and demands great skill and experience. Exactly how he achieves his results is a matter far too complex for discussion here, but what it is that he sets about

doing is easily understood. Sexual repressions usually go so deep that a great part of the treatment consists in bringing them bit by bit into the conscious mind. The doctor may himself see pretty clearly in an hour or so what the repressions are, but it is not possible to make the unconscious become conscious by preaching or expounding to the patient. He does not believe or admit for a moment the truth of what is told him. It requires all the doctor's skill and technique to produce the necessary interior conviction of what the unconscious conflict really is. When the conflict does become conscious a vast amount of repressed energy is released, and if it can be redirected into better channels a cure is effected. To show the patient that such channels exist is part of the doctor's task, but the decision as to what course to take remains entirely with the patient.

Now it is fairly obvious that the special skill demanded by this branch of psycho-therapy lies in the difficult art of restoring the unconscious repressions to consciousness. The process of educating and adjusting the conscious mind requires knowledge, sympathy, and tact, but is not so highly technical as the analytical process, and should be capable of accomplishment by the teacher, parent, or spiritual adviser. Psycho-analysis is bound to be a costly method of

treatment, because it involves the prolonged and concentrated attention of a man or woman who has had one of the most expensive professional trainings that exist. At present tens of thousands of people need this treatment and cannot possibly afford to have it.

But the state of things which produces such masses of neurasthenics is in itself unnecessary. If ordinary education could be made to include an elementary working knowledge of the fundamental instincts and how to deal with their manifestations, the amount of harmful repression would be very greatly reduced, and the necessary psychic adjustments of adolescence would be within the power of parents and teachers to direct. The analyst's work would then be reduced to more practicable limits. There will always be cases of abnormality and neurosis in the world; but the present tragedy lies in the paradoxical fact that so large a percentage of supposedly normal people are abnormal, and this in consequence of avoidable mistakes on the part of others.

## CHAPTER IX

### DREAMS

IN the preceding chapters of this book very little has been said of dreams, for while the dream is frequently used by the psycho-therapist in his treatment of neurosis, it has little practical value for the ordinary man in everyday life. The unanalysed dream is not particularly interesting, and dream analysis requires much knowledge, skill, and experience. The amateur dabbler in it accomplishes little and may be led into grave mistakes. Nevertheless, the dream has been so closely associated with analytical psychology that it cannot be entirely ignored in any attempted exposition of that science.

In the early days of psycho-analysis it was generally assumed that all dreams were alike in being symbolic expressions of the conflicts of the unconscious mind. Later it has come to be accepted that there may be different kinds of dreams, not all of which are necessarily symbolic and analysable. It is the personal opinion of the writer that the working of the mind in sleep varies greatly in different people and at different times, and that the symbolic dream so useful to the analyst is merely a very common species belonging to a larger genus. There may be

deeper levels of dream at which truth is expressed otherwise than by more or less grotesque and obscure symbolism. In this chapter, however, only the ordinary symbolical species is dealt with.

In sleep the repressive force which keeps unwelcome ideas from impinging on the consciousness is a good deal relaxed. The sense of what is suitable, decent, and consistent with one's self-esteem is weakened, and thoughts which in the waking state we should repudiate pass through the mind in the form of pictures. But, just as in the hypnotic condition the moral sense still regulates and to a certain degree restrains the actions, so in sleep there is something that holds back the frank expression of unwelcome or repellent ideas, allowing them to appear only in the form of symbols and parables. What this 'something' is no one has adequately explained. Freud originally personified it as the *endopsychic censor*, the judge within the soul. It is no longer necessary to postulate an entity of any kind that acts as a censor, for the individual sense of guilt and shame are quite sufficient to prevent a clear message being delivered from the unconscious to the conscious mind. The conflict between the desire of the individual to face the real facts about himself and his sense of guilt in regard to those facts is

so intense that it constitutes in itself a barrier to clear expression. In the form of a dream the unconscious manages as it were to slip a cipher message through this barrier, and the reading of the cipher constitutes the analysis of the dream. Just as parables are stories taken from everyday life but embodying a hidden meaning, so dreams are woven out of the material of daily happenings, but are symbolical of deep-seated problems of the soul.

The method by which dreams are analysed is briefly this. The patient recounts his dream, and the doctor leads him to trace his spontaneous associations with the persons, objects, or incidents contained therein. In the great majority of dreams the association leads from some simple and unimportant incident of the preceding day to a much more significant event in the past life, and thence to some big or small problem in the patient's mind. In technical parlance the incident or circumstances which immediately gave rise to the dream are called its *manifest content*, and the remoter and more significant incidents which association brings up are the *latent content*. Deeper than either of these there is usually to be found a more general and impersonal symbolism of which we shall speak further. For the moment let us take a very simple dream analysis to illustrate the points mentioned.



A man in a highly neurotic state tells the doctor, 'I dreamt last night that I was being chased by a mad dog.' The doctor elicits the patient's associations on *mad dog*, leading to the following analysis:

*Mad dog.*

- (a) I hate dogs. I saw Smith out with his terrier yesterday and it growled at me.
- (b) My father used to keep dogs when I was a boy. I was afraid of him. He got queer after a while and had to be put away (i.e. certified and sent to a mental hospital). *I sometimes feel as if I was going the same way.*
- (c) A mad dog. There's something inside me like a mad dog trying to get loose. If it does I'm done.

In the above (a) explains the manifest content of the dream and (b) the latent content, while (c) expresses the fundamental conception of unrestrained libido or instinctive energy. It will be noticed that while (a) and (b) are dependent on the man's *personal* associations, (c) is a piece of general symbolism such as any one might use. In dreams unrestrained libido is very commonly represented in animal form, a lion, a tiger, or an angry bull being ordinary symbols for it.

The dream just narrated made it quite clear that the man's neurosis was due to a repressed fear that he would inherit his father's insanity (cf. C. W. Beers, who became insane through fear of catching epilepsy from his brother, p. 93).

Instances as simple as the above are not very common, but there is a tendency for the dreams of children and uneducated people to be more obvious and less complex than those of the highly developed.

A further complication of dream symbolism lies in the fact that in a sense every important person or object in a dream represents an aspect of the self. Thus the mad dog, apart from its other significance, represented the lower nature of the patient. A further example will make these various points clearer

Mrs. M., an educated woman in process of being analysed, dreamt as follows.

I was in an empty room at the top of a high building, and the stairs by which I had gone up had crumbled away behind me. I was afraid I should never get down. The window was open, and presently a rough-looking but kindly man flew in at the window, picked me up unceremoniously, and flew with me to a safe place. I was relieved to be rescued, but exceedingly angry with the man for his unceremonious behaviour.

*Manifest Content.* On the previous day I had been packing in a loft approached by a steep flight of stairs.

*Latent Content.* The *rough man* is the analyst, whose methods are unceremonious and disconcerting. The *upper room* is the difficult position into which I have got myself through phantasy and an unpractical outlook on life. I am 'up in the air', and wonder if I shall ever get down. The stairs, i.e. the ordinary methods of dealing with the situation, have failed. The window is open, i.e. there might be a way out. The analyst *flies* in and rescues me, i.e. his methods of doing things are very queer, not what one would expect. I am *relieved* but *angry*, i.e. his treatment is proving successful, but I resent his direct attack upon my weaknesses.

*General Symbolism.* The *rough man* is the more practical and sensible aspect of Mrs M.'s character, which she rather despises, but in which her safety lies. The upper room in which the dreamer is cut off is a very common dream-symbol indicating dissociation from reality and fear of insanity (see p. 28)

The above dream has, besides the interpretation given, very obvious sex and will-to-power implications. The patient had the power instinct over-developed, and her unpractical idealism made the primitive aspects of sex

repellent to her, both of which facts are easily deducible from the dream.

Freud in his earlier writings maintained that all dreams typify some unsatisfied desire of the dreamer, and although later developments have tended to establish a wider classification, the *wish-fulfilment dream* is undoubtedly a very common type. Perhaps the best-known dream in the whole of Christendom is that of the boy Joseph, who dreamt that the sheaves of his brethren bowed down before his sheaf. Setting aside the question of prophetic visions, and considering the story of Joseph as it is told to us, we see a younger brother disliked and ill treated by his jealous older brethren, and phantasying a delightful revenge. Nomadic tribes reckon that to beget a multitude of offspring is the most satisfactory means of securing wealth and power. The sheaf is obviously a phallic symbol of fertility, and the little herd boy dreamt that he would found a family greater and wealthier than that of his elder brethren—a typical wish-fulfilment dream.

Another very common type of dream is that which represents an unconscious conflict. The following is a conflict dream of a highly imaginative young woman, showing the struggle between introversion and extraversion. She was at the time dangerously introverted, living in an

interior world rich in vivid and satisfying phantasy, and yet half-conscious of the peril of her condition. The turning inward of the libido had already produced in her various abnormal symptoms, among others kleptomania or pathological stealing. This habit began in early childhood as the result of some slight sexual shocks accompanied by very strong and entirely unsatisfied curiosity about sex. As is common in such cases, the objects taken were usually of such a trifling nature that no one missed them or suspected the delinquent. In later life the pilfering became more serious, and the whole affair was greatly complicated by the fact that the patient's repression was so complete as to produce amnesia, the thefts being committed in a state bordering on somnambulism. In the course of a very long analysis the memory gradually returned, one incident after another being recalled at intervals of weeks or even months.

During analysis she dreamt:

I thought I was Napoleon. Every one wanted me to fight a battle. I was going to, and then I thought I wouldn't. So I went back into my tent. It was gorgeous inside, with pictures and hangings and everything beautiful. It was a private place. No one else was there. The people outside kept on trying to make me come out

and have a battle. All the soldiers wanted it—thousands of them, stretching ever so far. But when I said they couldn't have it, there was an end to it: they had to lump it.

*I was Napoleon.* The abnormal introversion was due to an unsatisfied desire for knowledge, and especially knowledge of sexual matters. To her, power was synonymous with knowledge. Hence she dreams, 'I am all-powerful.'

*Every one wanted me to fight a battle, &c.* The people concerned in her welfare were anxious for her recovery. It would be a 'battle', because circumstances were such that to face reality and admit the truth about certain matters would be highly unpleasant and mortifying. But being 'Napoleon' she need not enter on the struggle unless she chose.

*I went back into the tent, &c* She decided to refuse the struggle. She therefore retreated into a world of phantasy, a *private* place where her unhappy secrets could be hidden, a *gorgeous* place, enriched by her unusual powers of imagination, where it was comfortable, all hung with *rich hangings*, and where there were *pictures*, mere representations of real things, not the things themselves.

*All the soldiers wanted it—thousands of them, stretching ever so far.* A double symbolism. All the urge of the outside world, all the great

power of social environment, were determined that her anti-social behaviour must cease. And again, the whole urge of the libido was pressing outward, the dammed-up stream was trying to burst its barrier.

*But when I said they couldn't, there was an end to it.* She had decided not to make the effort. She was 'Napoleon', and no one could make her do what she refused to do. And so, for the time, her analysis was blocked, and could proceed no farther.

Beside the wish-fulfilment and conflict types of dream, there is a third type which commonly occurs towards the end of an analysis and has been called the dream of rebirth. It is possible that such dreams may be experienced apart from any analysis, in cases where conflicts have been resolved in other ways, but detailed evidence about these cases is practically non-existent. An excellent example of a dream indicating sublimation or regeneration was that which closed the analysis of the young woman of whom we have just been speaking. It was as follows:

'I was in the Cathedral at evening service, sitting in my usual place on the Decan side. The full choir was there, mostly men and boys whom I knew. Those on the Decan side were singing the anthem "Blessing, Honour, Glory,

and Power",<sup>1</sup> but the other side were not singing at all, and presently I noticed that the candles on their side of the altar were not alight, while those on the Decani side were. I went up and lit them, one by one, *beginning with the middle row, then the top ones, and last the bottom ones.* When I was back in my stall the choir began to file out, only, instead of the procession being two and two, each went behind the other, so that they formed a single line, and so left the Cathedral.'

As is usual in the later stages of analysis, the patient was able quite readily to interpret the dream, which she did as follows:

'The Cantoris and Decani are the two parts of me. One part could not join in the anthem of Life. It couldn't sing, and was dark. I lit the candles in that way because I had remembered by degrees; the middle things first (i.e. the thefts which had occurred in the middle of the long series), then the late ones, and then those of my childhood. The choir passed out in one line, because now it is all unified. The two sides of me are joined up.'

Certain experiments were at one time made in which well-known psycho-therapists have analysed the same dreams and compared results, and the fact that their analyses have differed

<sup>1</sup> 'Blessing, Honour, Glory, and Power be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne and unto the Lamb for ever.' (From Spohr's *Last Judgement*.)



to a considerable extent has been taken by some critics as a proof that dream analysis has no real significance. One might just as well argue that because preachers and commentators give different interpretations to the same parable, therefore parables are without real significance. A dream is not the kind of cipher that can be decoded by means of a standardized key, but more like a series of Egyptian hieroglyphs in each of which many meanings are to be discerned. The analyst who feels the sexual or creative instinct to be the dominant one will find sexual symbols where another would find power symbols, but since the two instincts are merely different aspects of one force, the exact mode of interpretation is immaterial. Again, some analysts concern themselves mainly with the latent content of a dream, whereas others consider its general or racial significance to be more important. And just as no one but the painter of a picture can pronounce finally upon its real meaning, so no one but the patient can supply the associations which explain the pictures he has made in his own unconscious. The analyst may tentatively put forward an explanation, but it remains for his subject to accept or repudiate it. The truth of an analysis does not depend on the conviction of the doctor but on that of the patient.

## CHAPTER I

### SUBLIMATION AND RELIGION

ONE of the most interesting aspects of analytical psychology, and one which has so far received insufficient attention, is that of its relation to the discoveries of the ancient philosophers and religious writers pertaining to the human soul. Our libraries have in them many books which are as valid and valuable to-day as ever. We do not expect to supersede the wisdom of Plato, Cicero, St. Paul, St. Augustine, Thomas à Kempis and their like, nor can we find an ideal of human perfection more lofty than that set forth in the Gospels. Social conditions have altered and knowledge has advanced so as to render void many of the specific opinions and admonitions of these wise men of old, but they have enunciated a great number of practical statements about the soul of man which long experience has proved to be fundamentally true.

It follows, therefore, that modern psychology, in so far as it is a true science of the soul, will justify itself by corroborating, amplifying, and supplementing the ideas of the great thinkers, not by refuting them. From this point of view there is no 'new' psychology, and the modern

analytical theories are either as old as wisdom itself, or else deceptive.

Every new age requires to have ancient truths translated into contemporary language. Because the ancients did not talk about sublimation, complexes, and the unconscious, it does not follow that the ideas embodied in these terms were unknown to them. It is for us to correlate our views with theirs, for in so doing we widen our field of research indefinitely. So long as analytical psychology depends for evidence and material on the investigations made by psychiatrists of the last few decades into the neuroses of abnormal or subnormal human beings, its basis is too narrow to support any large superstructure. The science cannot grow out of infancy into established maturity until we habituate ourselves to looking at its hypotheses from a general rather than from a pathological view-point, and to testing their truth in its application to the healthy and normal as well as to the diseased and neurotic.

Analytical psychologists and psycho-therapists have the same ultimate objective as all the ancient philosophers, together with sociologists and lovers of humanity, have had from the first—to find a way by which human beings can attain to health and happiness. The analyst's method is to open a path by which the individual

may be able to sublimate his instincts; the social reformer hopes by education and legislation to bring about the better adaptation of man to his environment; the religious teacher leads men to worship and to imitate the Perfect Man.

It has already been shown that a successful sublimation is, in effect, an adaptation to environment. Like the social reformer, the analyst aims at bringing about a way of thought and a method of life which shall afford an adequate outlet to the individual in the environment in which he is placed. Such an adaptation, as already stated, must satisfy three conditions. It must be pleasurable to the individual; it must be useful to the community; and it must in some measure consciously fulfil the individual's ideal for himself <sup>1</sup>

People who are interested in the practical results of analytical therapy constantly ask such questions as 'What does analysis do to a person? What does this social adaptation actually consist in? Are people different after analysis? Does it alter the character?'

Analysis does sometimes appear to alter character, and has even been known to turn an apparent idealist into a very real brute! There are people who have built a complete false front, in shall we say the best Queen Anne style, to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 139.

conceal the slum tenement in which they really live. When analysis pulls this down, as it must, the change may be startling. In a less dramatic way false adaptations of pseudo-altruism, of sentimental tenderness, of appealing childishness are commonly broken down, and there is a transition stage, often of considerable duration, when the analysed person seems to have changed for the worse, to have become harder, more selfish, less affectionate. To pull out weeds may be quick work, but to establish fresh growth is a matter of time.

Analysis often brings about a very noticeable change of values. Trivial things which loomed very large assume a reasonable proportion. There was once a woman who used to spend the entire week-end fighting with the necessity of making out a laundry list, and who found through analysis that the task took less than three minutes. Again, courage and energy which lead to the tackling of new pursuits and new interests often result from analysis.

Nevertheless, the answer to the question, Are people different after analysis? is in the negative. The dwarf does not become a giant, but rather an integrated and adequate dwarf, who has accepted his limitations. There was once an actual physical dwarf who had brains and executive ability and clear-headedness and a love of

power. She phantasied herself as a teacher in a great public school, but when this dream proved impracticable because of her lack of inches she took on the task of reorganizing the stocking and distributing of school books and stationery for that same large community, and became a great personage in her world.

True sublimation consists in facing actual facts and dealing with them creatively. As has been said, the freeing of the life-force is always a fourfold process, consisting of an objective realization of experience, a uniting with it in love and acceptance, a period or it may be an instant of struggle and adjustment, followed by creative achievement, release, fulfilment. The process of sublimation, whether occurring as a result of analysis or through some other profound and regenerating experience, is this same fourfold one. There is the objective facing of real facts in regard to oneself and one's environment, there is the deep, humble, and open-armed acceptance of them, there is a period of searching and often painful readjustment to them, followed by a sense of fulfilment, integration, and poise, which is not necessarily permanent, but which becomes increasingly capable of being recaptured and sustained.

But what of the people to whom this whole theory of sublimation appears cold and lifeless as compared with that simple and practical

'following of Christ' which is the religious man's way of reaching the same goal? Are not these Christians justified in saying, 'What was good enough for the saints ought to be good enough for us'? If the sublimation of the analyst bears no direct relation to religion, there is a fatal inadequacy about it, for the religious instinct is so deeply implanted in humanity that no theory concerning the human mind and soul can ignore it and hope to live.

The question then arises, can the analyst's theory of the uprushing life-force showing itself in the will to power, in sex and in other creative activities, be shown to have any real relation to Christianity? Surely such a relation is not merely existent but fundamental.

The Christian ideal of the Perfect Man is set forth with absolute simplicity in the Gospels. Setting aside all dogma, setting aside, if we choose, even the question of historical validity, there remains in these records the biography of a man whose life has been accepted as the type of human perfection. Such a biography, under such conditions, may be justly and reverently considered also as a study in human psychology. For the Christ of the Gospels claimed for himself complete humanity as well as divinity, asserting himself to be a man among men, subject to every human temptation and limitation.

What, then, do the Gospels tell us about the conditions of life of Jesus of Nazareth? Of his youth very little, and yet that little is psychologically significant. We may infer that his home conditions were as nearly as possible perfect—his relations with his mother, with Joseph, and with the people of his village free from the avoidable thwartings and difficulties which hinder the natural development of the ordinary child with ordinary parents. In other words, his environment was a favourable one for the expression of what must have been a loving and thoughtful disposition. We have one extraordinary glimpse of adolescence. The story of the boy Jesus in the Temple<sup>1</sup> is in some respects a puzzling one. Looking at it candidly and without prejudice, we are struck by two facts—the fearless independence coupled with intellectual enthusiasm and brilliancy of the boy, and the painful lesson which even the perfect mother had to learn with suffering. In regard to the former point, the great pioneers in education have with one voice proclaimed that independence of thought and action, enterprise, enthusiasm, and love of learning are the natural attributes of the child who has not been inhibited and mismanaged in early youth. Experiment has shown that in some measure at least they

<sup>1</sup> Luke ii. 41 et seq.



are right, and that these qualities are latent in most children, and are inadvertently crushed and killed by injudicious adult interference.

The second point of the story is harder of acceptance by our conventional minds, though it would seem to follow logically enough upon the first. Having attained to adolescence, the Holy Child deliberately claims for himself a measure of personal liberty and self-determination far in excess of what would appear reasonable in western eyes. The customary explanation of the incident is that it was an isolated manifestation of superhuman privilege, but it is possible to see in it rather the divine right of any human child to find his way out of childhood through youth into manhood with a great deal less regulation from elders than we generally allow to our children. We feel that we have a right to be anxious about them when they are out of sight, and that we are justified in taking measures to spare ourselves this anxiety. The mother in the gospel story had to face what all mothers ought to face with the same brave submission—the shock that comes when the child who seems to them scarcely more than a baby, but who in himself feels the rising tide of manhood, asserts for the first time his right to a voice in regulating his own affairs. And it should be remarked that with the shock should come a feeling of pride and satisfaction.

For it is the children endowed with the vitality and enthusiasm to wish to strike out for themselves who are likely to grow up into healthy and useful citizens. The child who passively submits to being guided, arranged for, and directed until he becomes an adult in years is precisely of the type which develops neuroses, and fails to justify its existence later in life.

Beyond the fact that Jesus lived in harmony with his parents and the people of his village,<sup>1</sup> that he developed gradually in character and intellect, and that at twelve years old he had become a brilliant and attractive child, loving and obedient, but with a strong sense of personal freedom and independence, the biographies tell us nothing of him until he had reached full maturity. Then, significantly enough, we are given, not a consecutive record, but a large collection of typical and characteristic deeds and sayings. It is as though the evangelists would tell us—'Thus and so will the perfect man react to the typical circumstances of a human environment.'<sup>2</sup>

It is postulated of the Christ that in him the Holy Spirit was present in fullness and without limitation. This statement belongs primarily to

<sup>1</sup> Luke ii. 52. 'And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.'

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the working out of this idea in Elsa Barker's *The Son of Mary Bethel*.

the Christian conception of his Godhead, but one may also see in it an allusion to the freedom with which the life force welled up within him. It follows that in the Christ we find a character in whom the instinct for power and love and all creative activities were far stronger, one might almost say infinitely stronger, than in the average man. And it is a fundamental truth that any force is ambivalent, equally powerful for evil and for good. The opening scenes of Christ's ministry show the life-energy undergoing in him a great expansion, such as necessitated on his part momentous and far-reaching decisions between alternative courses, the one definable as good, the other as evil.

The events recorded of Christ at the age of about thirty years are three: his baptism, his retreat into the wilderness, and his temptation. Humanly speaking, the baptism may be said to typify an inrush of spiritual force and energy such as not uncommonly occurs when full maturity is reached. After it there followed a period of seclusion and meditation, a time of self-examination or self-study, in which we may imagine that he saw and considered his own potentialities, and came to definite conclusions as to how they should be employed. The story of the Temptation seems to indicate that the right use of power presented the gravest pro-

blems for consideration. Given power far above the normal, how may it legitimately be used? The various temptations furnish the negative answer to the problem. In the opinion of Jesus it might not be used either for self-help<sup>1</sup> or for self-aggrandizement. Nevertheless, the two commonest purposes for which men habitually exercise such power as they have are, to obtain satisfaction for their carnal desires whether innocent or the reverse, and to acquire the mastery over others.

One gathers that Jesus, looking into the future, was tempted, like others, to use certain methods of gaining a rapid ascendancy over his fellow men, with a view to facilitating and hastening the work he intended to do among them. He saw two possibilities. He could either, by a dramatic exercise of his supernormal powers, appeal to the multitude in such a way as to win their superstitious devotion,<sup>2</sup> or he might use his compelling personality to gain temporal authority, and by becoming a political leader could with ease introduce his idea of moral and spiritual regeneration.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Command this stone that it be made bread.' Luke iv 3

<sup>2</sup> 'If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence.' Luke iv 9

<sup>3</sup> 'All this power will I give thee . . . if thou wilt worship me.' Luke iv. 6-7.

The story relates that he sternly repudiated both methods, determining that the great force which he felt within him should never be used to extricate himself from the difficulties and dangers which would inevitably beset him during his ministry, to obtain for himself earthly honours, or to win himself popularity by pandering to the superstitions and curiosity of the crowd. Thus in the account of the Temptation we get a foreshadowing in terms of negation of the attitude which Christ is about to assume as regards the right use of power. And throughout his public life we find him again and again turning aside unhesitatingly from these same temptations, enduring hardship and suffering himself though relieving them in others,<sup>1</sup> striving to prevent his works of healing from being noised abroad, refusing the clamour of the idle crowds who 'asked for a sign', scorning to gratify Herod's curiosity when to propitiate the tyrant might have saved him much suffering,<sup>2</sup> and evading repeatedly the persuasion of his followers, who wished to set him up as their temporal ruler.<sup>3</sup>

In looking at the accounts of Christ's three years of public life, we are concerned with his manner of living rather than with his doctrine;

<sup>1</sup> John iv 31, 32; Luke xxiii. 35-7.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xxiii. 8, 9.

<sup>3</sup> John vi. 15.

with what he did himself, rather than with what he bade others do. Can it be shown that he consciously recognized the creative life in himself and dealt with it deliberately? Did he suppress his natural instincts as evil, or were they expressed as the modern psychologist demands that they should be? And if we can find that they were so expressed, was it in a way which could possibly be thought to satisfy the cravings of the ordinary power-loving and passionate human being?

We see him leading an intensely active life, entirely given up to the service of his fellow men. He journeys on foot from place to place, living in the open air, surrounded by a group of friends who are also his pupils. He divides his time between training these pupils in his methods and ideas, healing the sick or insane who flock about him wherever he goes, and teaching the ever-growing crowds attracted by the fame of his mighty works. We should expect nevertheless to find his active life interspersed with periods of retirement and prayer. The perfect man must strike a balance between extraversion and introversion, not being swept away in a vortex of ceaseless activity, nor yet given to an excess of contemplation involving inaction. The records tell us of nights spent in prayer on the open hill-side, and of efforts,

often unsuccessful because of the importunity of the crowd, to gain space for rest and quiet. In such a life as that of Christ there is abundant scope for the right expression of power. He exerts it over self, and on behalf of others. His self-mastery is complete, so that the claims of the body and mind are acceded to or denied at will, without any waste of energy in antecedent conflict or subsequent remorse. Hunger, bodily fatigue, and the need for mental and spiritual refreshment are among the things over which he has no hesitation in exercising lordship. We dominate others, being unable to dominate ourselves, and because of our weakness we lose a legitimate outlet and compensate ourselves by using an illegitimate one. The man who can master himself has no need to establish his superiority by lording it over others, since 'he that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city'.

Besides the satisfaction obtainable from self-domination, he has abundant scope for exercising his power in the service of others. A man who can spend his days in preaching, teaching, and healing has ample outlet for all his energies. There need be no sense of frustration in such a life, nor any necessity to find selfish modes of expression

It is interesting to note that in his work of

helping and healing Christ shows a particular realization of the devastating effects on the human mind of fear and anxiety. He hastens to relieve the terror of his disciples in a storm; he exhorts the poverty-stricken peasants of the countryside not to waste their strength in faithless anxiety about their future need of food and clothing, he calms and heals the demoniacs whose insane fears have been exaggerated into violent mania by the ignorant and brutal treatment they have received, the words 'be not afraid' are constantly on his lips.

It has been said that the instinct of outgoing towards the object in love and affection which analysts have somewhat crudely designated as sexual cannot be sharply differentiated from the instinct to power. Ideally the two are one, and should manifest as one. In the perfect man we should expect to find very little cleavage between the two, and in the life of Christ there are but few incidents in which power and love are dissociated. In almost every case his mighty works are prompted by an emotion of love and pity, and serve as an expression of this emotion. The sex instinct is shown as completely sublimated into a passion of love for humanity. It is neither repressed, as many would have us believe, nor yet weakened and attenuated. It has all the attributes of human passion, save the one



attribute of self-gratification. The love of Christ for humanity is not a matter of duty and self-righteousness. He does not devote himself because he feels he ought. It has nothing to do with charity in the degraded popular sense of that word. It is a burning passion, a consuming fire of irresistible might. It has tenderness and urgency; it moves him to tears of sympathy or despair. It drives him to break away from home and family, to brave disapproval and contempt, to wander forth on a romantic adventure, and finally to face and overcome death. There is no greater tale of passion and chivalry in all the annals of the human race than that set forth in the gospels. It is only our own habits of fear and repression which have led us to see in the life of Christ the description of an emasculated personality full of denials, refusals, and withdrawals. A life of hardship and adventure it was, but full, free, and satisfying to the soul. It is a curious thing that in the life of the closest and most literal of the imitators of Christ among the saints, namely St. Francis of Assisi, this element of joyous self-fulfilment is recognized and emphasized by modern commentators and biographers, while in the life of Christ we are accustomed to dwell exclusively on the self-denial, hardship, and suffering which are the inevitable conditions of all great achievement.

The tragedy which overshadowed the life of Christ lay in the fact that the world was not ready to receive so lofty an ideal, and thus returned hatred for his love. There is no hatred keener and more venomous than that of the pious hypocrite who sees his position undermined and his falsity exposed by a truly righteous man. St. Francis received the sanction of those in power in his day, while Christ, whose kinsmen and early associates were probably for the most part strict Pharisees,<sup>1</sup> incurred the bitterest opposition of those whom he had been brought up to love and respect. If we can picture his life as it might have been, freed from this opposition and enmity, we can see the joy and harmony that such an exterior as well as interior sublimation would have produced.

The happiness of the ordinary human being, even when he has attained to a very high degree of adaptation to and harmony with his environment, is marred by two things: first the inner conflict for self-mastery, and secondly the restricted flow of libido which limits his capacity to act and to feel. He has little power, and his emotions are thin and soon exhausted. He may wish to heal the sick, or to teach the helpless and ignorant, or to create objects of artistic beauty,

<sup>1</sup> See *St. Paul and the Church of Jerusalem*, by W. L. Knox. pp. 81 and 90.

but always his desires outrun his power to achieve, and while he still struggles his energy fails and the fire of his emotion is for the moment exhausted, so that he must pause and wait for a renewal of strength.

In Christ this inner conflict is transcended. The state of mind so vividly described by St. Paul, when he says, 'To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do',<sup>1</sup> was outgrown in the perfect man, because his unconscious mind was united with and under the control of his conscious, in a harmony unknown to us. His energy or capacity to act and to feel far exceeded that of the average man, his power to achieve what he purposed was limited only by the opposition of those he wished to help. His sympathy could find fullest satisfaction, for if he chose to heal disease or to dispel agonizing fear he was not thwarted by his own inadequacy, but only by a lack of 'faith', i.e. receptivity and open-mindedness, in the sufferers themselves.

The suffering which brought the earthly life of Christ to its close has tended to make the Christian world look upon that life as a melancholy and frustrated one. The Church has presented him to us primarily as the 'Man of

<sup>1</sup> Rom. vii. 18-19.

Sorrows'. But it is the hatred and misunderstanding of his contemporaries which bring the element of tragedy into the gospels. There was nothing sorrowful or gloomy in his own life as distinct from his environment. But the way of the highly evolved personality is obstructed at every turn by the passions of the primitive man, whose instinctive energy pushes forth to destroy rather than to build up. What is the relationship between the two, and how may the lower type advance to 'the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ'?

The life of primitive man may be compared, as in an image already used,<sup>1</sup> with the upper course of a stream, where it is small in volume, but direct, rough, and tempestuous in its progress. The volume of his libido is slight, but its expression is violent. The ratio of his conscious to his unconscious mind is small. He acts upon impulse and follows instincts without attempting to bring his motives into consciousness. He does not know why he does things, *and he does not care*. Like the mountain torrent he rushes headlong at obstacles.

In its middle course the stream has increased enormously in volume, but has lost impetus. It tends to go round obstacles rather than to dash over them. It is less direct, but also less

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter III.

shallow; what it has gained in depth it has lost in freedom of movement. As man's consciousness becomes fuller, his action becomes less instinctive. He is checked by thought and self-criticism, and he must find a way of circumventing rather than rushing headlong at his obstacles. Obstructions arise which he is unable to deal with, and his dammed-up energy creates a morass of indecision and despondency, or breaks out through unlawful channels of disease, crime, and insanity. At this stage man develops an ever-increasing desire for self-knowledge. 'Know thyself' is the universal dictum of the philosophers. 'Self-examination and repentance are the first steps towards holiness', say the saints and religious teachers. 'By meditation enlarge the consciousness and unite it with the universal consciousness', says the Eastern mystic. 'Bring the unconscious into consciousness and so resolve conflicts; free the libido and redirect it into better channels', says the analyst.

In its lower reaches the river is once more as unhampered by obstacles as was the mountain torrent, but with what a difference! The small, destructive, trivial cascade of water has become a calm and still flood, moving irresistibly towards union with the universal ocean, no longer destroying, but building up fertility as it goes. Increase of volume has produced an infinitely

greater force than that generated by mere initial impetus. So in his final perfection man acquires an increase of consciousness which gives him a power incomparably greater than the brute force of his beginnings, a power which he uses for the building up rather than for the destruction of the human race.

Such, then, is sublimation from the religious point of view, and many of the greatest analysts have admitted that to facilitate a lofty religious adaptation is the highest goal of analysis. But it would be absurd to pretend that this view is taken by all psycho-therapists. It is agreed that sublimation of the primary instincts is a necessity, but not all are prepared to admit that the libido of the individual must be educated to express itself in efforts for the good of the community. Nevertheless, it is incontrovertible that the man who, regardless of the needs of the herd, uses his energy to obtain self-gratification and temporal power may, although breaking no law of the land, sin against the supreme law of evolution. That law demands humanity's ultimate recognition of the fact that there can be no stability in any ideal inconsistent with the greatest happiness of the greatest number. It is fundamentally one with the law of Christian fellowship.

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*The Inner World of Childhood.* Wickes, F. G.

*The Nursery Years.* Isaacs, Susan.

*Introduction to Psycho-Analysis for Teachers.* Freud, Anna

*The Children we Teach (7 to 11 years).* Isaacs, Susan.

*Morality and Reality.* Graham Howe

*Talents and Temperaments* Angus McCrae.

#### PSYCHOLOGY OF DELINQUENCY

*Mental Conflicts and Misconduct* Healy, W.

*The Young Delinquent.* Burt, C.

#### ADVANCED

*Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis.* Freud, S.

*The Interpretation of Dreams.* Freud, S.

*The Problem of Lay Analysis.* Freud, S.

<sup>1</sup> The list of books relating to psycho-therapy has been revised and brought up to date. It is not practicable to revise the list of novels, for the principles of the new psychology have become so much an integral part of the modern novelist's outlook that he no longer uses them in the same obvious way as he did a few years ago.

- Contributions to Analytical Psychology.* Jung, C.  
*Understanding Human Nature.* Adler, A.  
*Psycho-pathology—its History, &c.* Hart, B.

### FICTION EMBODYING NEW PSYCHO- LOGICAL PRINCIPLES

- The Soul Sisters.* Anderson, A. J.  
*Lovers and Friends, &c.* Benson, E. F.  
*The Coward, &c.* Benson, R. H.  
*The Imperfect Mother; The Monkey Puzzle; The Prisoners of Hartling.* Beresford, J. D.  
*A Servant of Reality; The Depths of Prosperity.* Bottome, P.  
*The Tragic Bride, &c.* Brett Young, F.  
*Rough-hewn; The Brimming Cup.* Canfield, D.  
*The Regiment of Women.* Dane, C.  
*Zella sees herself; The War Workers; Consequences; A Reversion to Type; The Chip and the Block.* Delafield, E. M.  
*The Riddle, Memoirs of a Midget.* De la Mare.  
*Hidden Lives.* Eyles, L.  
*The Roadside Fire.* Linford, M.  
*Dangerous Ages.* Macaulay, R.  
*The Rector's Daughter.* Mayor, F. M.  
*The Little Soul.* Mordaunt, E.  
*Jones in Paris.* Muir, Ward.  
*Franklin Kane; Tante, The Little French Girl; Adrienne Toner; Dark Hester.* Sedgwick, A. D.  
*Promise; Succession; Laura.* Sidgwick, E.  
*Mary Oliver, The Life and Death of Harriett Frean; The Romantic, Arnold Waterlow, The Cure of Souls.* Sinclair, M.  
*The Back Seat.* Stern, G. B.  
*Jeremy; A Prelude to Adventure.* Walpole, H.  
*The Forsyte Saga.* Galsworthy.



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